

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

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also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 5, 2016

Downtown Planter Volunteer Group Accepts Professional Help

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

TURNERS FALLS – The perennials that seem to thrive best in the planters on Avenue A are confusion and contention. On April 20, freshman planter coordinator Gary Konvelski held an open meeting at the Montague town hall for planter stewards and the interested public.

This season, the biggest change will be the involvement of Leverett-based garden design/build non-profit Local Harmony. The organization, whose name seems to promote hometown amity, may have created an insider/outsider conflict that threatens to set back any unity created by last year's committee.

The Avenue A planters have been managed for a decade and a half by a "streetscape committee," in a populist fashion – the town grants these pieces of public space to anyone interested in working on them.

According to planter steward Eileen Dowd, the tradition has been "to adopt a planter and take care of it. Businesses would provide flowers, and the tender would take care of it. It was a real community effort by people who wanted Avenue A to be more beautiful."

Last November, Owen Wormser, one of Local Harmony's founders, gave presentations to the selectboard and to the Montague Business Association about his vision for the planters. According to Dowd, also an MBA steering committee member, Wormser's orig-



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Volunteers have maintained the town's planters.

inal proposal involved installing his designs in many, if not all, of the Avenue A planters.

Some residents believed that this would sever the relationship the community has to these spaces, which have in the past served as monuments to individual gardeners' pride of place. At the open April 20 meeting at town hall, which was filmed by MCTV and can be viewed online, several residents and planter stewards expressed criticism of the nonprofit's proposed involvement.

see PLANTERS page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Board Reduces Pipeline Request of Montague Town Meeting

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague's selectboard has voted to reduce a request to this Saturday's annual town meeting for funds to challenge a proposed contract between Berkshire Gas Company and Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP). The contract, which Montague opposes, was designed to support TGP's Northeast Direct natural gas pipeline project, originally slated to pass through the town. TGP's parent company, Kinder Morgan, recently announced that the project had been "suspended" for the time being.

Although the suspension is widely viewed as a victory for anti-pipeline forces in the state,

TGP has not yet withdrawn its application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for federal approval. The Berkshire Gas contract with the TGP, which must be approved by the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and is the focus of the Montague challenge, has not been withdrawn either.

The previous week Richard Kanoff, Montague's lawyer at the DPU, noted the project could be revived, perhaps in "another form." At the meeting on Monday, selectboard member Rich Kuklewicz used an unusual metaphor from a recent town meeting in Leverett: "Let's pretend we are a school and the pipeline has been suspended. Let's make sure it is expelled

see MONTAGUE page A5

Bastarache Ousts Incumbent Johnson from Erving Selectboard

By MIKE JACKSON

Scott Bastarache, chair of Erving's school committee, was elected to sit on the town selectboard Wednesday night, unseating incumbent Art Johnson by 124 votes to 75. George "Moonlight" Davis received 51 votes, and two voters cast ballots for none of the above, according to town clerk Richard Newton.

Twenty-four percent of the town's registered voters came out for the annual election.

Johnson's seat was the only contested race on the

ballot this year, but the retirement of Jim Carpenter from the board of assessors sparked a write-in contest. Recreation commission chair Mark Burnett won, with 77 votes, while Linda Downs-Bembury and Bruce Scott received 49 and 14 write-in votes.

18 people wrote in Keri Bastarache for an open position on the rec commission, while five nominated Mike Gralenski for a two-year seat on the board of health.

Johnson was running for his first full term on the selectboard, after being voted



Scott Bastarache

on in fall 2014 to fill a seat vacated by Eugene Klepadlo.

For more Erving news, see page A6.

Leverett Town Meeting Relaxes Bylaws for Solar, Worries About Schools

By MIKE JACKSON

Leverett voters gathered at the Elementary School last Saturday to eat donuts, drink coffee, revel in the good works of the town's public servants, and hash out town bylaws and budgets for the coming year.

The meeting's centerpiece was Article 15, overwhelmingly approved after a prolonged wrangle, which loosened the town's zoning bylaws for solar power installations.

Voters approved a town budget of \$5,867,722, up 4.6% from last year, of which \$3,888,029 will be spent on education, and approved an unusual donation of \$5,000 to the town of Montague to support legal fees associated with its intervention against the proposed natural gas pipeline.

Solar Regs Loosened

"We have a deep, deep connection with the land here," said planning board member



Occasional voting provided attendees a chance to stretch their arms.

Tom Ewing. "All of us share this desire to try to maintain Leverett the way it is, to the extent that we can.... We need to have a balance, as we're considering commercial development of solar."

The town's seven-member planning board has been working for more than a year, Ewing said, to devise the proposal that became Article 15. Its main innovation is to change the focus of regulation from the number of kilo-

watts a system would generate to the square footage of its panels. It then splits proposals into small, medium, and large categories.

"Small" systems, anything up to 1,750 square feet of panels, would not require planning board approval unless they are over 9 feet in height. Systems of up to 40,000 square feet of panels, nearly an acre, would require a site plan review or a special

see LEVERETT page A7

The Week in Sports: TFHS Baseball

BY MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – Alex Carlisle, Emmett Turn, Liam Ellis, Nick York, Trent Bourbeau, Tyler Charboneau, Zach Demars, Zach Wright and of course, Skipper Jason

Liimatainen.

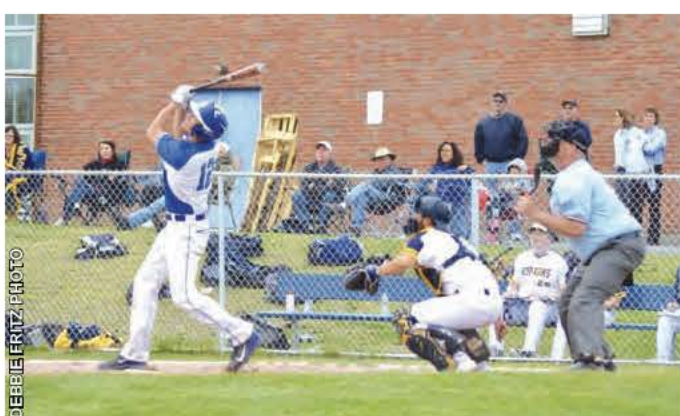
These are the names of the young men who played on the 2015 Turners Falls Baseball squad who are not on this year's roster. The very successful 2015 Indians, who lost 1-0 in the West-

ern Mass finals. So first-year Head Coach, Scott Minckler has his work cut out for him, inheriting such a young group of ballplayers, many of whom have not played on the Varsity level. So what has Coach Minckler been working on in the first few weeks of the 2016 season?

"We are just working on getting better game to game," Coach Minckler told me on April 25. "Some younger guys have stepped up and shown a lot of promise, so we will take things one game at a time and work on the areas that need improvement."

And after the first few weeks of the season, one thing has stood out for him:

see BASEBALL page A8



DEBBIE FRITZ PHOTO

Jay Fritz's ground-rule double, against Hopkins April 29, helped Turners qualify for the postseason.

By JOE KWIECINSKI

GREENFIELD

Michael Lewis, who took over as Program Director at the Recovery Project in February, feels the mission at his agency dovetails perfectly with his work in the Nurturing Fathers Program (NFP).

"I'm right where I can help people," said Lewis.

"I'm blessed with contacts in the community who want to help battle addiction, which affects families of all walks of life. Similarly, there is a movement, especially across Massachusetts, and the nation, that is recognizing that fathers are such a critical part of the equation.

"Dads are usually ostracized when there's a breakup of a marriage. Fathers are separated from their children – and, granted, sometimes there is a good reason for this. But most dads



STEPHANIE GALE PHOTO

Participants, and facilitators, of the spring 2016 fathers' group.

want to be a part of their children's lives."

Locally, the Nurturing Fathers Program has been helping fathers for five years. The successful effort is a collaboration of the Montague Catholic Social Ministries and the Family Center of the Community Action program, plus other partners, such as the

see FATHERS page A4

The Montague Reporter

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Our Downtown Noise Problem: Real Talk

By MATT ERICKSON and GWYNETH MERNER

As residents of downtown Turners Falls, we want to add to the ongoing conversation about the town noise ordinance.

We live directly above Hubie's Tavern – our kitchen window has a direct view of the patio stage where bands performed outside last summer – yet we've never called the police to file a complaint or confronted the business owners. As far as we can tell, neither of those options has ever fixed the problem.

We maintain that decibel levels shouldn't be the focus of this debate as much as the frequency and duration of these outdoor concerts.

We've attended nearly all of the Montague selectboard meetings where this topic has been on the agenda. These tend to only add insult to injury.

The discussions at the last meeting about our neighborhood struck us as classist, ableist and generally out of touch with the reality of living here. Most of the comments about "low-income housing" – a term that is usually a blanket code for some other prejudice – have been pretty gross.

We both have family members who have struggled their entire lives with poverty, addiction and maintaining stable mental health. We would hope that if they lived in a town like Turners, fellow residents or businesses would show compassion towards their needs and not be dismissive, discriminatory or judgmental about their conditions.

Renters and those with subsidized housing, whether "transient" or not, deserve peace and quiet just as much as any free-standing single family dwelling in a more suburban area. Economic status shouldn't automatically determine a person's right to control their quality of life.

The two of us have lived in cities before, places exponentially more populated than Turners, so it's strange for people to keep telling us what "we should expect" in the more urban part of town, or next to a bar. (It's even worse that this often seems to be coming from people who don't live downtown themselves...)

We expect the garbage trucks to

make a racket in the early morning right outside our bedroom window. We expect loud trucks and motorcycles to stream down the Avenue. We expect children to cry outside and people walking down the street to drunkenly yell at each other in the middle of the night.

That's all under our umbrella of expectation. However, we don't expect that live music directly beneath our apartment in four-hour blocks several nights of each summer month should be the standard for a mixed-use downtown.

We guarantee that no other city, town or village in the entire country would allow this amount of outdoor noise with this kind of frequency, and duration, in a neighborhood as dense as ours.

For one business to monopolize public outdoor sound space in a brick amphitheater between dozens of apartments is at best poor city planning, and at worst ignorant of the needs and desires of downtown residents.

Also, the arguments based on the musical taste of those who oppose outdoor music, that it's just "not our cup of tea," should be irrelevant. We're musicians ourselves, and have spent the better part of a decade touring around the country and playing loud and abrasive shows in all kinds of venues.

When we moved into our apartment downtown two years ago, we never chose to live in an "entertainment district," but we did want to live within a lively arts and music scene. We go to local shows many times in a week, sometimes every night.

Indoor music in our downtown is fine – it affords patrons and residents some degree of choice. Frequent outdoor music, while obviously fun for a number of patrons, deprives many residents of the choice to enjoy leisure time at home.

At the selectboard meetings, the owners of Hubie's seem to think they're being targeted and singled out, or made victims of a smear campaign by a few angry neighbors.

This is totally backwards.

Here are some things that we couldn't do in our apartment when there were concerts outside a few times per week last summer: talk on the phone; talk with each other in the same room; listen to our own music; read a book; take a



Letters to the Editors

County Waste District Clarifies

I have worked for the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District for 20 years; 16 years as the Executive Director. I have never shied away from inquiries from residents or town officials regarding assessments or our fee-for-service programs.

As such, I have responded openly to over 25 emails from Rich Drury beginning on March 10 and continuing through May 2. Most emails requested documents or data about the District's services to the Leverett Transfer Station. I have provided Mr. Drury with all of the financial information and data that he has requested.

I appreciate that the workings of the Solid Waste District are complicated, in that we have core services paid for through town assessments, and hauling contracts and services paid for through a direct fee-for-service administrative fee.

Mr. Drury's concerns seemed to focus on the hauling contracts and fee-for-service costs, but his financial analysis presented at Saturday's Leverett Town Meeting included the core assessment amount. This creates a skewed number for cost/benefit comparisons when discussing just the

hauling fee-for-service component of the District's services.

Mr. Drury and I arrive at very different calculations for the financial benefit to Leverett through the District's hauling contracts.

From my perspective, Mr. Drury has failed to account for the 23% fuel surcharge the town was paying its hauler in 2010 vs. the 9% fuel credit the same hauler was giving the District through the contract I negotiated. In April 2010, the Town paid almost \$300 in fuel surcharges for hauling trash and recyclables. Under the District's contract it would have received \$117 in fuel credits.

Also, under my contract the town began receiving revenue for scrap metal, which has averaged \$1,700 per year. My calculations show the town saving \$2,600 by using the District's hauling contracts, not paying more as Mr. Drury contends.

Based on Mr. Drury's own calculations, the 2015 cost to Leverett for all District services related to hauling materials from the transfer station cost \$3,500, not \$8,000 to \$9,000 as he has stated. An analysis of transfer station budgets from 2000-2017 show the highest operating budgets are prior to the town joining the Solid Waste District. The current transfer station budget for hauling is almost \$4,000 less than it was in 2010, including the District's assessment and fee-for-service administrative charges. This is very different than the picture that has been presented.

Mr. Drury notes in his latest editorial that the District's assessment has increased by 38%. I agree that 38% is a high number, but one must consider the total dollar amount. For Leverett, a 38% increase totals approximately

\$300 each fiscal year for six years. A few years ago, the District adjusted its fees to create a balanced budget that would avoid an increase in the assessments by spreading costs among assessments and fee-for-service programs. Many residents do not realize that the assessments only pay for 65% of the District's overhead operating budget. The remaining 35% of the budget is raised through administrative fees for programs such as hauling contracts, household hazardous waste collections, and transfer station/land-fill inspections.

At town meeting, Leverett voters expressed their appreciation for Mr. Drury's efforts years ago at the transfer station, but they also expressed their support for the current relationship with the Solid Waste District. The vote regarding the contract with the Solid Waste District was virtually unanimous to continue with our services, and the article was defeated.

So why am I am writing post-town meeting? Any time there is a vocal and public denouncement of the Solid Waste District, it affects not only the specific town involved, but all member towns. It is important for all District residents to know that I am confident that the charges made against the District have been convincingly refuted.

My co-workers and I are committed to providing the highest levels of programs and services to all 22 member towns in the most economical manner possible. I believe all of the data proves that to be true.

Sincerely,
Jan Ameen
Executive Director, Franklin
County Solid Waste District

nap; watch a movie; invite friends or family over for dinner; have the windows open to stay cool; go to sleep early to prepare for an early morning job.

No doubt all of this is true for many of our neighbors, around 30 of whom signed a petition in our shared frustration.

So: who are the victims in this?

We have absolutely no problem with public concerts with the participation and endorsement of the surrounding residential community. Just like everyone, we want a thriving downtown Turners, one with successful businesses and diverse residents.

We're looking forward to warm summer weather and all of the bustle that brings to our front door, but, to be honest, we're dreading the music.

Matt Erickson and Gwyneth Merner live on Avenue A.

Food Not Cheaper!

I read with interest your editorial, "Poverty: The Ultimate Fossil Fuel Pipeline" (April 21).

I have to make one correction. Food is *not* getting cheaper!

Two examples: A loaf of bread is getting shorter, and the slices thinner. Cereal boxes are thinner, and

not filled all the way to the top.

Like everything else, we are paying more and getting less.

Keep up the good work on a great paper.

George L. Payzant
Turners Falls

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

Miniature horses will be at the Turners Falls Branch of Greenfield Savings Bank on Saturday, May 7, from 10 am to noon.

Support the Friends of the Montague Libraries at their **used book sale** on Saturday, May 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. They'll have thousands of books, DVDs, and audio books to choose from.

Gill residents: Don't forget that the annual town meeting will be held Monday, May 9 at the town hall. There are 27 articles on the

warrant, including the Riverside cemetery takeover, the NMH solar project, a new police cruiser, and a whole lot of fiscal housekeeping.

On Tuesday, May 10, the Gill Montague Senior Center will host local historian Ed Gregory for a presentation and discussion on **The Evolution of the Turners Falls Gill Bridge**. The event starts at 1 p.m. and is free and open to everyone. The center is located at 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls.

The **Turners Falls Fishway** opens May 11. The viewing facility near Unity Park will be open through June 19, Wednesdays through Sun-

days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will also be open Monday, May 30 for Memorial Day.

Spring on the Connecticut River offers an unrivaled opportunity to witness the migration of shad, sea lamprey and other anadromous fish. These fish migrate from the ocean and head upriver to spawn in the rivers of their birth.

A visit to the Fishway provides an opportunity to learn about these amazing journeys. Admission is free. The Fishway is located at 15 First Street, off Avenue A in Turners Falls.

The Greenfield Community College Music Department will present a **free concert at the Shea Theater, Poetics of Song**, on Thursday night, May 12, from 7 to 9 p.m.

It will feature original compositions, as well as a "David Bowie tribute with Radiohead." Doors open at 6:30. The Shea is located at 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls.

Local author and historian **Bruce Watson** will be at the Leverett Library on Thursday, May 12, starting at 7 p.m. to read from and talk about his new book, *Light: A Radiant History from Creation to the Quantum Age*.

From 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, May 6, **Montague Catholic Ministries** will host a "reverse raffle" fundraiser event, Heart to Heart, at the Country Club of Greenfield. The organization will honor many of its partners in the community. Tickets to the event, which includes a dinner, are \$75 for two. For more information call MCSM co-director Susan Mareneck at (413) 863-4804 x 1001.

Apology to Business Owner A Step In The Right Direction

In the news these days, we hear time after time again about cases where Brown and Black lives are shown *not* to matter when they are killed while carrying a bag of Skittles, walking in one's own apartment staircase, or playing with a toy gun in the park.

In many cases, the people who have the power to use the guns are not held accountable for their mistakes. This is an example of white privilege and white supremacy – even if the people holding the gun, in some cases, aren't white.

I am writing to celebrate an example of people in power taking responsibility for their actions in our very own neighborhood of Turners Falls. Thanks to the services of Montague Community Television, I was able to watch the Selectboard meeting of April 25, 2016, since I wasn't there in person. During the public comment section, I witnessed an unusual event.

Rodney Madison, the only Black business owner in Turners Falls,

"*Light* takes us on a lyrical and illuminating journey from myth to scripture, canvas to cathedrals, prisms to fiber optic networks, all part of our attempt to understand – and to capture – the very essence of the radiance around us," writes Laura J. Snyder, author of *Eye of the Beholder: Johannes Vermeer, Antoni Van Leeuwenhoek, and the Reinvention of Seeing*.

On Saturday, May 14, the **Letter Carriers' Food Drive** celebrates its 24th year helping the hungry. This is the largest single-day food drive in America.

Non-perishable items can be put in a bag next to your mailbox for pick-up. Contact your local post office to see if they are participating. If not, maybe bring a bag of food to the nearest participating post office. All food collected will be brought to the area food pantries and community centers.

Barton Cove is filled with unusual geology, spring wildflowers, local history and dinosaur prints. On Saturday, May 14, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., join leaders from the Pioneer Valley Institute; Nancy Goodman, a naturalist; the very busy historian Ed Gregory, again; and geologist Richard Little, for a wonderful spring day along the Connecticut River.

Bring your lunch and water for this two-mile hike along the forested and rocky trails to the end of the peninsula. Registration is required through pvi@gcc.mass.edu or by calling (413) 775-1671. This program is not handicapped accessible. Price is \$10 per person.

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More Letters to the Editors

Divest State Pensions from Fossil Fuel Investments

The moral and environmental reasons to divest public and private funds from fossil fuels are many. We now know that the environmental impact of fossil fuels includes drought, rising sea levels, increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather, ocean acidification, earthquakes, oil spills, gas leaks, pipeline explosions, and contaminated soil, water and air. People all over the globe are already suffering from the alarming effects of climate change.

Recently it was learned that major oil companies have known for decades about the environmental damage caused by the extraction, processing, transportation and consumption of fossil fuels, yet they continued to deceive the public and support the efforts of climate change deniers.

But divestment is not just a moral or environmental issue anymore.

A recent analysis from the investment firm Trillium Asset Management indicates that Harvard University's fossil fuel holdings have cost the endowment \$21 million over the course of the 3-year student divestment campaign.

Of increasing concern is the fact that the Massachusetts state pension fund has had \$521 million in total losses from fossil fuel investments in the last year alone. It is time to conclude that fossil fuels are a bad financial investment. For moral, environmental and financial reasons, we should not be investing the state pension fund in companies that pro-

mote an unhealthy planet and a non-sustainable future.

A growing number of individuals, municipalities and institutions are either considering divestment from fossil fuels or have already done so. More than 220 institutions have now committed to divest from fossil fuels – including faith organizations, foundations and pension funds – as part of a global campaign launched by *350.org*.

As a result of the bold and successful stand taken by UMass student divestment activists, the president, Marty Meehan, has stated that he wants UMass to be the first public university in the country to divest all direct holdings from all fossil fuel companies.

It's time for our state legislators to make a bold stand as well. As a member of DivestOurPensionsNow, I urge you to contact your state legislators now asking them to support divestment of the state pension fund from fossil fuels and investment in renewable energy.

Bill H.2372 would create a divestment commission to report on the advisability of divesting by the end of this year. It is the only remaining bill that provides a path to divestment. Please ask your legislators to support the bill with amendments to get coal divestment started immediately and to ensure that the composition of the commission is balanced.

Sincerely,

Karen Guillette
Montague Center

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It's spring time, and that means it's time to plant your garden. Another thing that the vernal equinox means is **MOSES AND LICHENS**. If you have a favorite one of these plants or non-plants living nearby, please bring a specimen of it to the Five Eyed Fox, 37 Third Street, Turners Falls, for transplanting into the **New Siluria Moss Garden**.

FATHERS from page A1

Department of Housing and Community Development through ServiceNet, which has guided homeless fathers to the program.

During this latest round of NFP classes Lewis and Dominic Vellucci, family resource director for Community Action, were teaching their initial class. A third facilitator, David Connors of the Department of Children and Families, was aboard for his fifth group.

The class has a 12-week format and the goal of the curriculum is to help fathers become better fathers. "It's a really intensive, powerful program," said Lewis. "It gets participants to examine how they were fathered. It helps give them insight as to how they might be fathering their own children. It helps them look at any possible unhealed wounds, which, of course, could help them heal and then the participants could be better fathers."

Before each meeting Vickie Barber-Flynn, with the help of her daughter, prepares meals through the auspices of the Montague Catholic Social Ministries. "We start each class," said Michael, "with a meal together just as a family would enjoy their evening dinner. It's a great way of bonding and building connection."

Of eight students who began this most recent class, five graduated. Four of these are in the prerelease program at the Franklin County Jail. Meanwhile, six more fathers are preparing to be-



Michael Lewis, program director at the Recover Project, is helping teach Nurturing Fathers classes this spring.

gin the next series of classes.

"The Nurturing Fathers Program has an outstanding curriculum," said Lewis. "It has flexibility, for one thing, which enables us to bring in our lived experience. So I'm able to share aspects of my life. I've been blessed to have been in recovery for 27 years...it fosters frank, genuine dialogue."

"From the very beginning, the participants were engaged, transparent, and open about their personal traumas, challenges, and pain they have suffered and the wrong turns they have made in their lives. And all of them have a burning desire to be more fully integrated into their children's lives."

David Connors agrees. "There is a big mis-

conception that these men do not care about their lack of being able to play the role of a father, teacher, and provider. I can tell you after having worked with men from all walks of life – fathers in jail, fathers involved with DCF, or maybe just single fathers needing support – that they all care, they all wish they did things better, even if they aren't quick to admit it."

David points out three key components that have helped to solidify NFP: transportation, dinner before classes, and child care. "In the demographic we're working with," said Connors, "these factors can be very real barriers to getting the services we offer."

In addition, Connors notes that the program has had a number of graduates who have repeated the curriculum, giving credence to the notion that participants are deriving benefit from the sessions.

Jason Allen, a graduate, will soon start training to be a facilitator. Allen has also spearheaded the Father Support Group, an open-door arrangement where fathers who wish to attend a currently active Nurturing Fathers Program, may join the support group until a new curriculum starts.

Stephen Hussey is another veteran facilitator. "Of the many positive responses we have had," said Hussey, "the most powerful is to hear men say how relieved they are to find that their concerns, their questions and doubts, are shared by others."



NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Community-Wide Paddle Planned For July

By KENT ALEXANDER

This past Monday night the Gill Selectboard met and breezed through the business at hand.

Ray Purington, selectboard administrative assistant, reported that there were no updates for ongoing issues on the board's plate: Green Communities projects, studying inflow and infiltration at the Riverside sewer system, the Mariamante land, and the proposed community solar project. He also stated that work to print the town's past Annual Reports was not yet completed.

Purington gave an update on the project to insulate the safety complex roof with foam. The warranty inspectors had recently visited the site, and noticed that the material used to patch the roof had not sufficiently done what was needed. Therefore, additional patching would have to be done.

Purington indicated that the work would be accomplished by the time the inspectors returned on Friday.

Purington then reported that significant work had been done on the Gill Elementary School well project, but that the project team has had to change the scope of the work to look at possibly utilizing more expensive valves to deal with the amount of inorganic and secondary materials found in the samples.

He expressed concern that if the levels of arsenic found in the well stayed as high as they currently were, this problem would need to be dealt with. Purington went on to say that more information was needed to understand the ionization process in the well, but that he'd gotten a call from a local natural water business that volunteered to assist in remedying the problem.

Selectboard member Randy Crochier announced that there were three 2016 lawn mowing bids. After a brief discussion, the selectboard unanimously chose to

award the job to the lowest bidder, Landscape Architecture.

The board unanimously approved the appointment of two new firefighters, Tyler Richardson and Shane Wells, contingent on passing their medical exams.

The selectboard also signed off on the necessary Election Warrant for the upcoming May 2016 town election.

The board also agreed unanimously to grant the use of the Riverside building facilities for an Energy Commission home energy video and the distribution of Rain Barrel kits on Saturday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Purington read the recent invitation to the selectboard to attend the Town of Gill's Memorial Day Ceremonies, which will begin at 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 29 at the Gill Congregational Church and continue at the Veterans Monuments across the main road. Selectboard member John Ward volunteered to make a brief opening statement at the Monuments part of the event.

The evening's final business was the reading of the announcement for Gillbilly Bike and Boat event, to be held on Saturday, July 16 starting at 9 a.m. at Munn's Ferry.

This event will be a community-wide paddle down the Connecticut River. Ray Steele will launch the boats, and a prize of free trash stickers will be awarded to the boat that collects the most trash.

For those interested in completing the loop by bicycle, a trailer will shuttle bikes from Munn's Ferry to Barton Cove and people and boats back to Munn's Ferry as needed. If one has need of a boat or paddling partner, or has any questions, contact Isaac Bingham at either isaacbingham@gmail.com or 863-4431.

Gill's annual town meeting will be held Monday, May 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the town hall.

NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

G-M Budget Assessments Unchanged for Towns

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

At their April 26 meeting the Gill-Montague school confirmed their decision not to change the budget to be presented at the Montague town meeting on May 7. This was their last opportunity to make changes in the budget for consideration by the towns, so any further adjustments would have to be made at town meeting. Gill holds its town meeting on May 9.

One change that would not affect assessments was requested by superintendent Michael Sullivan. He asked the committee to approve a change to accommodate an adjustment in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) estimates based on new enrollment data reflected in their March 1, 2016 report.

The report shows Gill-Montague's estimated charter tuition expenses have increased from \$1,026,400 to \$1,115,173, while anticipated reimbursements have increased from \$98,352 to \$227,379.

Sullivan said the district had budgeted \$1,000,000 for the expenses, and \$100,000 for the reimbursements. He recommended increasing the budget by \$100,000 in both columns to account for the expected changes.

He also assured the school committee members that this would not affect town assessments, and was a legitimate action as long as it was made prior to town meeting. The committee approved the change unanimously, increasing the total FY'17 operating and capital budget for district to \$18,762,925.

Sullivan reported that he had attended the April 13 meeting of the Montague finance committee to discuss the district's interest in obtaining funding from the town for repair of the columns at Sheffield, and the stage reconstruction at Hillcrest.

"The members understood our needs," he said, "but funds were not available at this time." A project to

repair leaky pipes at Hillcrest is on the warrant for town meeting, but all other requests by the district were not. The finance committee suggested these projects could be considered by the town at a future time, perhaps at a special town meeting in the fall.

Jeff Singleton came before the school committee with a presentation on the "Foundation Budget" formula and how state aid is structured, and to offer some of his ideas on how it could be improved. A portion of the discussion looked at how the fluctuation of enrollment affects state aid while fixed costs do not change. He said, "Smaller districts have higher per-pupil costs, because there are less students to pay for the extra teacher or nurse." This led to a discussion of the impact of poverty on students and how that translates to costs.

Marjorie Levenson, member from Montague said, "It feels like a fixed system: if you're poor, you stay poor." She said it was an "unequal system," and asked, "How do you get a level playing field?"

Sullivan said, "The cost of educating poor kids is much higher than wealthy kids," pointing to the need for more school counselors and other educational enrichment needs for economically disadvantaged youth.

Singleton said, "Dependence on income tax, or property taxes, leads to high variability of revenues with the ups and downs of the economy."

"What would be your solution?" Sandra Brown, committee chair and member from Gill, asked Singleton.

Singleton said the goal should be to have a percentage of state aid with "an enrollment variable that reflects actual enrollment – and then give everyone a 2% increase annually after that."

"Expenses keep going up, so it makes sense," said Brown.

The next regular school committee meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on May 10 at the Turners Falls High School.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

before we stop working on it.” Leverett appropriated a contribution of \$5,000 to the Montague effort.

Kuklewicz then stated that “an appropriate amount [to ask of town meeting] in case we need to rejuvenate the case would be... \$20,000.”

The number on the current town meeting warrant is \$50,000. The board voted to approve Kuklewicz’s recommendation. There will be an amendment at the annual meeting to reduce the amount on the warrant.

Kuklewicz gave a brief report about a meeting he had attended at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments about upcoming state highway improvement projects. He said the General Pierce Bridge, which runs between Montague and Greenfield, was “on the list.” The bridge is considered by officials in both towns to be in dangerous condition. Kuklewicz said the bridge project is slated to begin in 2019 or 2020.

Apparently, Greenfield’s fire chief noted that the bridge is a public safety risk for ambulances and fire trucks, and a MassDOT official said that such concerns, expressed by individual fire and police chiefs, might help move projects up the list.

Dog Hearing

The board voted to put down a dangerous dog which, it believed, had been improperly

moved from Montague to Greenfield.

The dog, named Diamond, had been declared dangerous in 2014 because she severely bit at least one postal worker. After several hearings, a number of conditions were placed on the animal’s owner, Jody Rattigan, including a requirement to construct a fence and keep the dog inside.

Police chief Chip Dodge sat down at the front table, alongside Rattigan. dog officer Calin Giurgiu, and Leslee Colucci, head of the regional animal shelter.

Dodge reviewed the history of Diamond’s attacks on humans, and the conditions imposed on Rattigan after her successful appeal to the district court of an initial order to euthanize the dog.

Dodge argued Rattigan had failed to meet a number of conditions. She had three “status review” hearings with the clerk-magistrate, and “at each hearing, Miss Rattigan had failed to complete the tasks.” Dodge portrayed the clerk-magistrate, a Mr. Chaffee, as extremely patient.

The straw that apparently broke the camel’s back, according to Dodge, was Rattigan’s decision to move with the dog to Greenfield. This action did not violate the guidelines imposed by Montague, but rather an order from the court that the dog could not be moved without permission of police chiefs of both towns.

Diamond was seized by the dog officer, on

the order of the clerk-magistrate, and taken to the regional animal shelter on Sandy Lane in Montague. There she currently remains in a small holding pen. Mr. Chaffee explained that Rattigan had violated the town’s guidelines, “hence this is a Town of Montague case.”

Dodge recommended that Diamond be euthanized.

Colucci argued that the dog might originally not have been dangerous, but now being impounded in the shelter for nearly 30 days, “when an animal can not leave a cell it does not improve [her] personality...”

Colucci said she was angry that “someone,” presumably the magistrate, had tried to help the animal for two years, and the euthanization rate in her shelter was “very, very low.” She said her volunteer staff was quitting because “they do not want to see an animal left in a pen.”

Rattigan presented a lengthy defense of her actions. She said she had told both the clerk-magistrate and dog officer at a hearing that she intended to move: “I’m the one who brought it to their attention.”

The magistrate, she said, told her that she needed to tell the dog officer when she moved. So two days before the move, she notified the dog officer who, she claimed, took a month to get back to her. She contacted the Greenfield police chief, who told her she needed a “court order.” When asked how to get a court order, the Greenfield chief

“said he would get back to me.”

“Five months later,” continued Rattigan, “I pull into my house, with four Greenfield police people,” and the dog officer, who said he had a court order to take Diamond.

Rattigan also noted that two and a half years had passed “without one incident” involving he dog. Rattigan then read at least six letters from family and friends testifying to the dog’s happy, gentle and obedient disposition, as well as her ability to get along with children.

After a good deal of back and forth between Rattigan, Dodge, and the selectboard, as well as the presentation of a video by Colucci showing Diamond crying in her pen at the shelter, selectboard member Chris Boutwell stated, “Since this has become a court matter, I’d send it back to the court.”

Kuklewicz noted that this would require that the board vote to euthanize Diamond followed by an appeal to the court by Rattigan.

The board then voted unanimously to euthanize the dog.

In other news, the board voted to approve the transfer of Kyle Whalley to the Chicopee Police Department and appoint Jamal Holland as a temporary police officer.

The board appointed Ed Gegory to the Montague Historical Commission. Although Mr. Gregory lives in Greenfield, his residence was not seen as an obstacle to serving on the Commission.



Old Buildings, Sewers Top Montague Town Meeting Agenda

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague town meeting of May 7 will confront the perennial problems of a rural post-industrial community: leaking roofs, hazardous materials in old factory buildings, and a decaying sewer system. On the sunny side of things, there is a new bylaw to encourage solar development, an article to upgrade the HVAC system at the popular Shea Theater, and a proposal to create a mechanism to extend fiber-optic cable to underserved parts of the town.

The majority of town meeting motions will be “money articles” linked to the FY’17 budget. The finance committee, the fiscal arm of town meeting, says in its report that it “proposes a balanced budget of \$22,978,645.” Actually this budget total includes a large number of separate articles, ranging from the town “operating budget” (police, public works, etc.) to the water pollution control facility (funded mainly from sewer user fees), educational assessments to two school districts, the municipal airport, and the Colle office building.

The budget also includes over \$2.3 million in “special articles” that would finance everything from highway department equipment to roof repairs at two libraries to a major overhaul of the storm drain system under the Turners Falls power canal.

One question mark could be the largest money article, the assessment for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. The GMRSD budget increases by 2.96%, actually a smaller percentage increase than the town’s operating budget. However, the proposed assessment, or cost to Montague, which by statute is proposed by the school district, is \$8,852,114. This is an increase of 4.16%, and is above the “affordable assessment” calculated by the longterm fiscal plan adopted a few years ago to end state control of the district.

The finance committee has proposed an assessment \$50,000 lower than the school district’s request. As of this writing, there has been no

negotiation to create a compromise number.

If town meeting accepts the finance committee recommendation, it will effectively vote down the school district budget and assessment. The other possible options are a town meeting vote for the higher number, or an amendment by the school district to lower its request.

In any case, the disagreement on the largest money article on the town meeting agenda could spark further discussion of how the Gill-Montague district’s assessment to the towns should be calculated.

Spending Money

The requested town operating budget, the second largest money article, totals \$8,769,783, an increase of 4.45%.

This includes over \$2.1 million for “public safety” (primarily the police department and board of health), over \$1.9 million for the department of public works and approximately \$1.2 million in “general government” (including treasurer, town clerk, selectboard, and legal budget).

Employee benefits, including employee health insurance, rose by nearly 6% to over \$2 million. The budget for “cultural and recreation,” which includes the libraries and the parks and recreation department, is \$484,074.

Both the finance committee and selectboard have recommended a cut in the proposed budget of just over \$44,000.

Other key money articles include:

- * \$385,000 for costs of abating hazardous materials in the Strathmore Mill complex. The future of the Strathmore, which is now owned by the town, has been an ongoing issue at town meeting. Some members have called for the complex’s demolition, while others have argued demolition would be nearly as expensive as continued efforts to market the old mill. This warrant article is based on the assumption that whatever path is taken, removal of hazardous materials will need to be financed. If it passes, a Proposition 2.5 “debt exclusion” vote would be

- required for borrowing, and could take place in late June.
- * \$1,000,000 to repair or replace sewer siphons and storm drains under the power canal: more repairs needed to aging infrastructure funded by borrowing, in this case dealing with the clogged drainage that leads to the Connecticut River. The town meeting warrant also allocates \$200,000 to the water pollution control facility stabilization fund, a reserve that will fund similar sewer projects in the coming decades. These allocations have generated significant upward pressure on sewer rates.
- * \$14,000 for roof repairs at Carnegie Library, and \$20,000 for similar work on the “old town hall” in Montague Center, that houses a branch library.
- * \$44,700 for an assessment of a potential new public works facility on Sandy Lane. A new DPW garage appears to be next on the long list of town building needs. The list includes a new library and senior center.
- * \$50,000 toward repairing or replacing the HVAC system at the town-owned Shea Theater. This will supplement \$75,000 in state Green Communities grant funds. Last year, the town bid the project out, but the state grant amount proved insufficient, leading to this supplemental request.
- * \$50,000 to supplement funds for the town’s challenge to the Berkshire Gas precedent agreement with Tennessee Gas Pipeline LLC. The selectboard plans to lower this amount to a \$20,000 contingency, based on the possibility that the pipeline company could withdraw its federal application for the project in the near future. TGP has “suspended” the project.

Non-Money Articles

Spending money on old buildings and sewers will not be the only activities to engage town meeting members on May 7. There are also a variety of interesting “non-money articles” that could push the meeting into the late afternoon. These include articles that would:

- * Amend two zoning bylaws.

- One would establish new guidelines for access roads to residences with setbacks of more than 500 feet, to include grades, curves, and turnarounds on such roads. Another would allow “solar energy facilities” in the general business district, subject to a special permit from the zoning board of appeals.
- * Establish a new Lieutenant position in the police department. This position is virtually an assistant police chief, who would “fill in for the chief during his absence and take command of the police department.” The lieutenant would also relieve sergeants of office duties, “freeing them up to be out on the street where they are needed.”
- * Establish a special revenue account for money from Comcast subscribers destined for the local access station, Montague Community Cable Incorporated (MCCI). According to the new contract between the town and MCCI, the funds now pass through the town rather than directly to the station.
- * Establish a Municipal Light Plant (MLP) to receive state funds and administer a contract to extend broadband to underserved areas of town. An MLP is required by state law to administer grants for this purpose, and two town meeting votes are required to establish an MLP. This will be the second. It will require a 2/3 ballot vote.
- * Rename the portion of Greenfield Road that extends from the Pan Am Railroad crossing to Montague Center “Old Greenfield Road.” By the way, the state-funded project to fix the bridge over the railroad is finally underway, after nearly two decades of local demands that the railroad be required to do the work because it undermined the old structure. The new bridge will provide limited access (bicycles, pedestrian and emergency vehicles) to the renamed road.

The fun starts this Saturday, May 7 at 8:30 a.m. in the Turners Falls High School auditorium. The public is welcome, but only elected Montague town meeting members may vote.

VOTE - MAY 16

MATTHEW MCMULLIN

FOR MONTAGUE HOUSING AUTHORITY

TOWN OF GILL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

REGARDING THE RENEWAL OF CABLE TELEVISION LICENSE OF COMCAST OF MASSACHUSETTS/VIRGINIA, INC.

6 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The Town of Gill Selectboard, as the Cable Television License Issuing Authority, will hold a public hearings on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 6 p.m. at the Gill Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, Massachusetts, pursuant to 207 C.M.R 3.05(3) and any applicable cable television renewal license, laws, regulations or requirements, regarding the renewal of the cable television license of Comcast of Massachusetts/Virginia, Inc.

The proposed Cable Television Renewal License and any relevant applications, reports, statements and/or amendments in the possession of the Town to be considered at the hearings shall be available upon completion for public inspection and reproduction at a reasonable fee at the Selectboard’s office during regular Town Hall hours.

SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF GILL

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TOWN OF ERVING - HELP WANTED

Are you looking for A FULFILLING SUMMER JOB? Do you enjoy interacting with children? Then look no further, the Erving Summer Park Program is the place for you! We are currently seeking an **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** and **FOUR COUNSELORS** to finish our 2016 summer team. Requirements for a Counselor: Must be at least 16 years of age, Energetic, Punctual, Responsible, Cooperative, Flexible, Creative and preferred experience with children. Assistant Director: In addition to all of the above, you must be Organized, a Leader and **MUST** have experience with Children.

Applications can be picked up and returned at the Erving Town Hall, 12 E. Main Street, no later than June 1. (No late applications will be accepted.)

PLANTERS from page A1

Dowd says she believes that much of the beauty of the planters lies in how they encourage the self-expression of their stewards. “Whenever one person makes the decisions for a big space, it tends to look the same,” she said.

Longtime planter coordinator Anne Jemas describes the program historically as “a lovely collaboration between volunteers and the town.”

“It was reflecting the spirit of Turners, representing people’s individuality,” Jemas said.

But over the past few years, the planters have generated a lot of conflict on the streets, and in the arena of the selectboard. In the fall of 2013, downtown merchant Rodney Madison’s planter at 100 Avenue A, which he festooned with whirligigs later enshrined in town documents as “Non-Plant Objects,” led to a debate on aesthetics and moss in public space that nearly ignited a culture war.

This Cuban Missile Crisis of public gardening was eventually averted when the town assembled a committee last year, chaired by Madison, to create a set of rules for the planter stewards, which quantified an allowable number of Non-Plant Objects. Then the selectboard disbanded this committee.

In January, the board appointed Konvelski, an outspoken critic of Madison, as planter coordinator.

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The mission of Local Harmony, founded by landscape architect Wormser and herbalist Chris Marano, is to create gardens in public spaces. They want, according to Wormser, to “make gardens and garden-building accessible to the community.”

The organization says it intends to make its projects affordable, by using volunteer labor for installations, purchasing plants wholesale, and minimizing maintenance costs through good design. Donations for Local Harmony’s projects are solicited on their website.

Since the April 20 meeting, Local Harmony has been assigned three planters. Wormser has waived his design fees, and the group has dropped its initially stated fundraising goal from \$900 per planter to \$450.

In a laudable point of synchronicity, Wormser has arranged to accomplish one of Konvelski’s goals as coordinator – having Franklin County Tech horticulture students care for them.

This month Wormser will lead a workshop for these students, where they will renovate and install plantings in the planters. If enough funds are raised by Local Harmony (around \$500 or \$600), the school will employ a few students to maintain them through the growing season.

Fears of a broader planter seizure can most likely be put to rest. “Once you adopt a planter, it’s yours until you abandon it,” Konvelski told the Reporter.

An up-to-date list of claims to planters does not yet exist, and I await its publication, to find out if there’s one for me to adopt. In the meantime, Konvelski gave a broader go-ahead that I assume I can pass on to others interested in growing things:

“If you have a spot in front of your place, go at it.”



Erving Votes Again to Keep Its Treasurer Elected

By KATIE NOLAN

Voters at Erving’s annual town meeting on Monday said no to an appointed treasurer, and no to a 21-hour per week library assistant, but said yes to a \$9.7 million FY’17 budget, a schematic design for a new library, and a Taser for the animal control officer. The meeting also approved putting \$779,476 into the stabilization fund.

Treasurer Margaret Sullivan, with one year left before her elected term ends and she retires, proposed that future treasurers should be appointed. Sullivan said that the treasurer’s job has become more complex over the years, with increasing state and federal mandates.

“An election is a popularity contest,” she said. “I’m concerned – I’ve worked very hard over the years to make sure the town is on the right track.”

“A lot of people are screaming about transparency,” said selectboard member Arthur Johnson. “If you elect a treasurer and don’t like them, as soon as recall is in effect, you can recall them.”

Other residents argued that elections provided greater citizen control of the office. Brenda Silva suggested that an appointed treasurer should be recommended by a citizen’s committee, not just selected by the selectboard alone.

Finance committee member Daniel Hammock said that an appointed treasurer would “have to please the selectboard,” and cited the terminations of the appointed former fire chief, highway superintendent and administrative coordinator by that board.

The motion to change the treasurer’s position from elected to appointed failed by a vote of 39 to 27.

Library Votes Split

The library trustees included funding in their requested salary line item for increasing the library assistant’s hours to 21 per week. Employees working more than 20 hours per week are eligible for health insurance and retirement benefits. Currently, the assistant works 15 to 19 hours per week, with 15 hours paid by the town and additional hours paid through a state grant that will not be renewed.

Library trustee Mackensey Bai-

ley told the meeting that the additional hours would allow the library to keep a dedicated and qualified staff member and to stay open for longer hours. She noted the additional cost was less than 1% of the total town budget.

Hammock suggested that the trustees could find other ways to increase library hours. He said the cost of health insurance could range as high as \$16,000 per year, if the employee selects a family insurance plan.

Jeanie Schermesser suggested hiring a second part-time employee for the few additional hours.

Librarian Barbara Friedman replied, “the training, skill level and personal connection needed cannot be accomplished in a few hours per week.”

By majority vote, the meeting approved an amendment reducing the library assistant funding from the requested 21 hours to 19 hours per week.

However, the library trustees prevailed on other articles, obtaining unanimous approval for accepting the design for a new library building at 34 Northfield Road, for accepting and expending grants for library construction, and for a continuing appropriation of \$30,000, saving up a pool of money for library renovation or construction.

Coupled with money voted at the 2015 annual town meeting, the library renovation or construction fund stands at \$55,000.

Hammock urged the meeting to approve the articles, because a successful application to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners could bring in approximately \$2.5 million for the \$4.5 million project. He noted that, with the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility paying approximately 85% of town taxes, residents would pay only \$320,000 for the construction.

After the meeting, Friedman said that the unanimous votes on the construction articles would help the town score points on its grant application to the MBLC.

Other Business

The meeting voted \$1,250 to buy a Taser for the animal control officer.

“Where do you draw the line on

this?” one voter asked. “I don’t think even police should have Tasers.”

Police chief Chris Blair told the meeting that he was attacked by a dog last year and, if he had not used his Taser, would have been seriously injured. “And the dog is still alive,” he said. Blair assured the meeting that the animal control officer would be trained and certified for Taser use before being issued one.

The funding was approved, by majority voice vote.

All other financial articles passed unanimously, including:

- \$2,840,756 to fund Erving Elementary School;
- \$1,619,784 for secondary education;
- \$544,652 for Franklin County Technical School;
- \$1,293,856 for employee benefits;
- \$594,455 for public safety (police, fire department, emergency management, animal control and tree warden);
- \$591,998 for general government (town boards and committees, treasurer, accountant, tax collector and town clerk); and
- \$512,278 for public works (highway department and waste collection and disposal).

Town meeting also approved raising \$494,476 from taxation, transferring \$285,000 from free cash to add to the stabilization fund, and raising \$300,000 from taxation to add to the post-employment benefits trust fund.

CORRECTION:

In last week’s Erving selectboard article (April 28, “Board to Interview Coordinator Finalists May 7”) we incorrectly identified one of the three finalists recommended by the hiring committee. Bryan Smith of Greenfield was incorrectly named as Bryan Jones. Brian Jones was the guy from the Rolling Stones who died in a pool. We apologize for the error.

The Erving town report was dedicated to Kathleen F. Hammock: “We wish to thank you Kathy for all your years of service to the Town of Erving. It is an honor to dedicate this year’s Annual Town Report to you.”

According to the dedication, written by her husband, finance committee member Daniel Hammock, “the shy girl from Wheelock Avenue who would barely say ‘Hi’ (without blushing) to someone she didn’t know” served as library trustee from 1984 to 2002, was town treasurer from 1988 to 2002 and tax collector from 1989 to 2004.

As treasurer and tax collector, Hammock brought these offices into the computer age. She authorized the purchase of the first computer for the library, a Commodore 64. She was also assistant town clerk for many years. According to the dedication, “She always did her jobs with a smile and a great sense of humor.”

Kathy Hammock accepted the bouquet of roses from the selectboard and the standing ovation from the town meeting with tears in her eyes.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Town Hires Group to Study Senior Housing Needs

By KATIE NOLAN

In a brief meeting before the annual town meeting, the selectboard signed the contract with LDS Consulting Group of Newton for a \$16,400 senior housing needs and market study for Erving and Wendell.

Pam Parmakian, acting director of Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority’s community development department, told the board that LDS will hold a kickoff meeting this month, will conduct surveys in Erving and Wen-

dell between May and July and will submit the final report in August.

The Erving study will be in greater depth, and will consider both needs for senior housing and the types of housing that would be appropriate for the town. The Wendell study will focus on housing needs.

Rebecca Hubbard was appointed to the senior housing committee.

The board decided that resumes for the administrative coordinator candidates will be available at town hall on written request. Town counsel Donna MacNicol advised

that, because the resumes contain sensitive personal information, the selectboard should keep a record of people who review them.

The board will interview the three administrative coordinator candidates – Bryan Smith of Greenfield, Sheila Dibb of Rutland, and Steven Boudreau of Barre, Massachusetts – on Saturday, May 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the town hall meeting room.

The interviews will be open to the public, and the board will accept written questions.

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LEVERETT from page A1

permit process with hearings, depending on what zone they are in, and “large” systems would require both a special permit and a bond to fund their eventual dismantling.

Medium and large systems would require 100-foot setbacks on all sides.

“Everybody is free to put however much solar they can on their roof,” Ewing added.

Barry Oberpriller of North Leverett Road criticized the article. The zoning board of appeals rejected a request Oberpriller made this winter for a variance because his proposed installation is in a “rural village” zone and did not meet the parcel size required under the town’s current bylaws. The new ones would do away with that limitation, but 100-foot setbacks would severely hem in Oberpriller’s developable area.

Moderator Larry Farber asked Oberpriller to address the merits of proposed regulations rather than any specific projects.

“We’re the only place in Leverett that can put a solar farm in,” Oberpriller said. “You have to have three-phase power, and North Leverett Road is the only one with three-phase power in the entire town – it ends at Cave Hill [Road].”

“We’re not voting on your project,” Farber again told him.

Nancy Grossman spoke in favor of the article, and discussed the impacts of climate change on frontline communities elsewhere. “I have a particular concern that there’s a bias toward preserving the aesthetics in town,” she said. “I would also like to encourage us all to take a much harder, global view.... I appreciate that we need to make sacrifices and changes.”

Grossman proposed an amendment to reduce the setbacks, which was discussed at length and defeated by a counted vote.

Planning board member Richard Nathhorst also proposed an amendment to treat any “medium” projects as “small,” and eliminate the height restriction on small systems. This was also defeated.

After a full hour and a half of discussion, the question was finally called, and the new solar bylaws passed 99 to 5, with two abstentions.

Education

Leverett’s assessment to the Amherst-Pelham regional high school district has for years been calculated on the basis of enrollment, but there is a movement in Shutesbury to withdraw that town’s consent to this alternative method of assessment, which would automatically trigger a reversion to the state’s “statutory” method, which is based on measures of wealth and would substantially increase Leverett’s assessment.

Shutesbury voters will consider doing that this coming weekend. But representatives from the towns have worked out a proposed compromise, which weighs assessments 90% toward the per-pupil method and 10%

toward property values.

Sean Mangano, the district’s finance director, described the deal as “sort of a step, that satisfied Shutesbury officials.”

School committee member Kip Fonsh characterized the situation as “the result of close to five years of very contentious discussion between members of the regional school committee,” and endorsed the article because “failure to vote on it would have extraordinarily dire consequences for the elementary school, and the region, and probably the four towns that make up the region.” “A lot of the discussion in Shutesbury has been very closely held,” said selectboard member Peter d’Errico. “The community at large needs to understand how serious the issues are.”

“Where does this school district come from?” asked Ray Bradley. “Can we mix it up with some other towns?” “Shutesbury is basically forcing us into this,” said Farshid Hajir. “We need to be having a higher-level conversation with the town of Shutesbury on this issue.”

“I have been shocked at the level of non-communication ... between the boards in Shutesbury,” said school committee member Sarah Dolven. “I don’t know if people in Shutesbury really understand what’s going on in their town.”

Voters approved Article 5, which endorsed the compromise assessment, but also Article 6, expressing that they would prefer to stick with the per-pupil method.

They also approved the formation of an “exploratory committee” to look into forming a new elementary school region.

“This is the bedrock of this community. People still move here because of the school – it’s that good,” said Fonsh. “But it can’t stand up on its own without our support.... Regionalization has become kind of a dirty word, I think, for many, but it can’t be and it shouldn’t be.”

Finance committee member Tom Powers described the elementary schools as “financially very inefficient.” “It costs us several thousand dollars more a year to educate a kid in the elementary school than it costs to educate them in high school,” he said. “Exploring options of different ways of being more efficient is absolutely critical, in terms of controlling the tax rate in Leverett. Education is over 70% of our budget.”

Mutual Aid

Article 21 allocated \$5,000 of Leverett’s free tax to neighboring Montague, to help defray costs that town is incurring in its Department of Public Utilities intervention against Berkshire Gas’ contracts for natural gas from the proposed, and now suspended, Kinder Morgan pipeline, which would run through Montague but not Leverett.

Portia Weiskel spoke in the article’s favor. “We need to make decisions with a larger picture of the globe in mind,” she said.

The town’s finance committee

was not in favor of the article, and speaking as a resident, member Stephen Nagy condemned it, pointing out the town is giving its fire department and police department an increase of \$5,062 for FY’17.

“These are people that protect us,” Nagy said, adding, “I don’t think we should be taxed to support another town.”

Montague selectboard member Rich Kuklewicz was recognized by the meeting, and made an appeal for the donation.

“This is a regional issue,” he said. “The devastation that could happen just from one incident will be felt far and wide,” he argued, and if electric utilities are permitted to charge ratepayers in order to subsidize gas for generators, everyone would be affected.

“Kinder Morgan is suspended,” he concluded. “I think we need to make sure they’re expelled.”

“It’s a feel-good item,” said Wesley Osinski. “If people are feeling philanthropic in this audience, write a check!”

“All communities have to be taking small steps to deal with the wider issue of fossil fuel usage,” argued Ann Ferguson. “The next one may be coming through Leverett.”

“It has been suspended,” said Don Robinson. “I don’t think this is an appropriate use of tax money from Leverett.”

“If the petition is withdrawn by Berkshire Gas, I don’t anticipate spending much more money,” Kuklewicz said, in response to a question about how Montague would spend and account for the funds. “If we don’t need to spend the money, we will not spend the money, and money will be returned to Leverett... We will return whatever portion, up to all of it, we can.”

“Look how we all felt this morning – a little uncomfortable, when we were talking about the people up the hill in Shutesbury, who were not operating in the interests we wished they were,” said Rachel Peterson, referring back to the school district controversy. “Thank you, Montague! We would like to be good neighbors with you.”

The article passed by a majority voice vote.

Transfer Station

After passing a non-binding resolution advocating for sweeping campaign finance reform, a diminished meeting spent its seventh hour discussing Leverett’s transfer station, prompted by four separate articles petitioned by former transfer station coordinator Richard Drury.

Article 32, which would require the department to hire college students for any position not filled in two weeks, came under criticism as micromanagement, and was voted down.

The next article proposed terminating the town’s relationship with the county’s Solid Waste Management District since 2011. Drury and district coordinator Jan Ameen gave contradicting presentations about the

fiscal impact, and additional benefits, district membership had provided to Leverett.

The article also failed by a voice vote, but it had become clear in the course of discussion that Drury’s proposals were motivated by his concern the town might close the station.

“I appreciate that there’s a chance to talk about the transfer station, because it’s important to us, but I don’t know where anybody got the idea that it was going to be closed,” said d’Errico. The selectboard had polled the town about its future, he said, but “the answer came back: we like it.”

“This is one of the best dumps in the state, and Rich built that,” said Brooke Thomas. “So, I think we owe him a good deal of thanks.”

Drury withdrew Article 34, which would have established that the transfer station should only be closed by a town meeting vote.

The meeting’s final article, Article 35, would have advised the department to keep the facility open on

both Saturdays and Sundays.

“My sole intention is to be open more hours,” said Ananda Larsen, the station’s current coordinator, while outlining challenges created by receiving waste on two consecutive 3-hour days, and explaining why staying open Wednesday nights was also important.

By then severely depleted, the meeting also rejected this article, by a vote of 21 to 28.

Town Offices

The day’s sole contested election came after the retirement of Jeff McQueen from the planning committee. Two residents, Fay Zipkowitz and Gary Gruber, were nominated from the floor to run alongside incumbent Richard Nathhorst for the two open seats. Nathhorst and Gruber won, with 97 votes each.

A vacancy remains on the town’s school committee, after only one candidate, Tara Acker, stepped up to fill seats vacated by Kip Fonsh and Alan Mully.



NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Chief-Sharing Proposition Fails to Excite Selectboard

By JULIE CUNNINGHAM

The Leverett selectboard met on Tuesday, May 3, for its regular biweekly meeting. Present at the meeting were members Julie Shively and Tom Hankinson, as well as Lisa Stratford and Margie McGinnis. Chair Peter d’Errico was absent. The town treasurer/collector will receive the proposed six month raise after a positive review from Shively. The raise was approved by the board after a motion from McGinnis.

The town’s contract for monitoring solar arrays and solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs) will have to be renegotiated with another company. McGinnis explained that resident Carter Wall doesn’t normally work with small towns like Leverett. “Carter doesn’t take anything right now,” she added. “The rate isn’t usually negotiable.”

McGinnis was able to get recommendations for another company, based in Hadley. Rural Aggregators of New England, she explained, would take a 4% cut from the monitoring of the solar energy production. The board voted to try Rural Aggregators of New England for one year.

Instead of sending a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, the board voted to send a letter to UMass requesting participation in an experimental grant.

“Since the cost of joining two transportation authorities was prohibitive, this seems like a good option,” said Shively.

A letter from Shutesbury regarding a shared police chief for the towns of Shutesbury, Leverett, and

Sunderland was discussed. At this time, the board decided to pass on the idea of developing a resolution for a shared police chief.

“At this point we are not interested. Leverett has a stable police department,” said Shively.

“We should make Gary aware, and see what he thinks,” Hankinson added.

The board resolved to seek the opinion of Chief Billings, but not to go any further at this time.

The board discussed the recently revived tax relief committee. While the actual procedure for determining who qualifies for tax relief in Leverett was unknown, Shively explained that the committee would evaluate applications once they were received.

“It should be fairly clear who qualifies, and who should submit an application,” said Shively.

The board agreed to research the procedure in other towns to better understand the process and authority delegated to a tax relief committee.

Leverett received results from testing of the water in the wells the town is responsible for, and while levels of manganese and iron were detected, the town is in compliance with all other elements.

“We are good on all the dangerous stuff,” Shively stated.

The current organizational structure of the board will remain intact.

The next meeting of the Leverett selectboard will be May 17, when the board meets with Amherst. On May 31 the board will meet with the residential electricity aggregators.

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BASEBALL from page A1

“Errors have been a thorn in our side so far this year. We have been concentrating on our defense in practice a great deal lately, and I hope it’s paying off. I have also been moving players around to find people that can play positions where we have had some issues, but we are young and working on getting better every day.”

After 10 games, the young Indians sit at 4-6 and 1-1 in League play. Here’s a quick recap of the last few games.

TFHS 10 – Pioneer 4

On April 20, Powertown extended their winning streak to 2 games by defeating Pioneer Valley, 10-4. The Tribe did so by cranking out 8 runs in the fourth inning and adding insurance runs in the sixth and seventh innings.

Pioneer had their own 3-run rally in the sixth but, by then it was a 9-3 ball game with only an inning left. Although the Tribe hit double figures, the only extra base hit was a double by Trevor Mankowski.

Mankowski went 2 for 3 from the plate, batted in a run and crossed the plate once. Tionne Brown also hit twice, had a RBI, and scored 2 runs.

On the mound, Obuchowski allowed 5 hits, let up 4 runs, gave 2 walks and fanned 6. On the brighter side, after 6 games, Turners finally had absolutely no errors!

Mohawk 2 – TFHS 1

Turners’ brief streak came to a screeching halt on April 25 with a heartbreaking 2-1 loss to the Mohawk Warriors. Although Powertown only managed two hits, they were in the game till the last at-bats, when a wild pitch sealed Blue’s fate.

It was a hard loss to take for Minckler’s Tribe, who were in the midst of a one-run pitcher’s duel. But it was only one loss, and the young Indians had many more games in front of them.

Croteau and Mankowski had the 2 hits for Turners, and Sanders scored the run. Wazniak drew the only walk.

Lavin pitched 4 innings, allowed 2 hits, 1 run, 1 walk and threw 2 strikeouts, while Doyle pitched 2 innings, let up 3 hits, a run and a walk. Unfortunately, Blue again committed two costly errors in the loss.

Athol 5 – TFHS 3

On April 28, the Athol Red Raiders bested the Blue Indians 5-3. In the top of the first, Powertown came up empty and when the Raiders scored two in the bottom of the inning, Blue was forced to play catchup ball.

They chopped in a run in the second, but Red scored in both the third and fourth innings, and Powertown found themselves down 4-1.

Turners made it a 1-run game in the sixth when they scored 2, but Athol answered with a run of their own, and blanked them in the seventh.

Fritz cracked a double, scored a run and batted in a run. Sanders knocked in the other 2 runs. The Tribe’s other runs were scored by Brown and Lavin.

Mankowski went 2 for 3 from the plate and pitched 2 and 2/3 innings, allowing a run, 2 hits and striking out 3. Obuchowski pitched the other 4 and 1/3, allowing 4 runs on 8 hits, walking 2 and fanning 4.

TFHS 4 – Hopkins 2

“We’ve earned a seat at the table,” Coach Minckler said after the April 29 game, “and now it’s up to us which seat we get.”

By beating Hopkins, Turners Falls has qualified for the playoffs. And if they keep winning, their seeding will improve.

The Hopkins Academy Golden Hawks have been one of the elite of D-IV baseball of late, but Turners has always played them tough. In the playoffs last year, the underdog Tribe blasted them 14 – 7.

But it’s a rebuilding season for Powertown who were still finding their sea legs when they traveled to Hadley to challenge the 5-1 Hawks.

The game was so cold that fans were wearing winter coats and huddled under blankets, but the weather didn’t deter the spirit of the Tribe or their followers. When the Indians kept the Hawks off the score board for the first 2 innings, they finally “broke the ice”. Hopkins had been scorching the ball, getting men on base in scoring position, but Turners was able to get the final out to retire the side before Hopkins could cross the plate.

In the third, Turners finally broke the stalemate. It’s hard to stay cold when you’re sprinting down the baseline, trying to beat out an infield grounder. But Blue managed to get on base and because of heads-up base running,



Turners’ Quinn Doyle fires the ball over the plate in a close 2-1 loss against Greenfield Tuesday night.

they advanced into scoring position. And with the weather the way it was, and with base runners taking provocative leads, the Hopkins pitcher began to throw wild.

The opportunity was not lost on the third base coach, who sent his boys home on passed balls twice, giving Turners a 2-run lead.

Being such a good team, Hopkins was not about to just give up, and when all was said and done, they had slammed out an incredible 12 hits. At times, Doyle was facing a bases-loaded situation with the batter ripping long fouls, but Turners kept their cool and ended 2 innings by snagging double plays.

Hopkins clipped away at Blue’s lead, making it a 2-1 game in the fourth.

And then came the bottom of the seventh. Although Turners has vastly improved in their error count (2 in the Hopkins game), they made some costly mistakes. To the collective groans of both the Blue and Gold fans, the game went into extra innings when Hopkins tied the game at 2.

Turners, who had not scored since the third inning, were now in the position of trying to preserve the grueling win.

And then Fritz came to bat. With 2 men on, Jay Fritz rang a ground-rule double for the go-ahead run. This was followed by another wild pitch, which gave Turners a 2-run cushion.

Hopkins did not go silently into the night. With 2 outs, a Hopkins batter hit a cloud-

scratcher. “He’s got it,” one of the mothers said hopefully as the ball rose up above the outfield. “Yes,” another fan said just as hopefully, as it began its descent. And after it landed in the right fielder’s glove, someone else said, “I thought it was out of here.”

Four Indians got hits in the game, Brown, Croteau, Lavin and Fritz. Fritz had the RBI double. Brown, Doyle, Mankowski, and Sanders scored the 4 runs. Leamy drew a walk and Bergmann was hit by a pitch. Doyle pitched all 8 innings and although he let up 12 hits, he allowed only 2 runs. He had 5 strikeouts and 3 walks.

Greenfield 2 – TFHS 1

And then the rains came. The only spring sport that can be played in the rain is lacrosse, and Turners doesn’t have a lacrosse team. Since April 29, every single event was canceled, except one tennis match and a Tuesday, May 3 baseball game against Greenfield.

I was an ump back in the seventies in the Turners Falls Middle School Softball League, and I know how tough it can be, so I won’t comment on the double-play-slide rule which was raised by Skipper Scott Minckler. I’ll just give a quick recap of the game itself.

Greenfield took the early 1-0 lead in the top of the first. Blue answered in the third when Mankowski batted-in Brown. Then in the fourth, Green took the lead for good when Turners was unable to complete a double play.

Turners cracked 7 hits, committed 2 errors, left 6 men on base, stole a base, and had 2 players hit by pitches. Both Bergmann and Brown had 2 hits for the Tribe. Brown also had a stolen base and scored the Blue’s only run.

Doyle, Fritz and Mankowsky accounted for the other 3 hits, with Mankowsky providing the RBI.

Obuchowski took a base on balls, and Sanders and Wazniak were both hit by pitches. Doyle pitched 7 innings, walked 1, struck out 2 and allowed only 2 runs.

So the Turners Falls Baseball Indians are young but are playing with heart. And although they are currently at 4-6 and 1-1 in the Hampshire West League, they have made the postseason. And, as Coach Minckler said, it’s up to them which seat they get.



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B1



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Letting Go

MONTAGUE CITY – In roughly forty years of gardening, I’ve seen some amazing successes. I’ve made plenty of mistakes as well.

One thing I’ve learned is: sometimes you just have to let go.

When Woody and I were still living in a small apartment in Old Deerfield, my landlord turned over a big piece of the field across the street and had several loads of manure delivered. He generously offered us some space and we planted cantaloupe. Astonishingly, it grew up from seed, set out huge vines and provided us with at least twenty large, tasty fruits.

Try as we might, we were never able to replicate that astounding success.

After several more attempts, we gave it up and decided to buy our melons at the Farmers’ Market.

When we bought a home in Montague, we had to carve a garden space out of a shrubby, weed filled side yard. We put in hours of labor,



GULLAND FORGE PHOTO

The broadfork.

clearing, digging and then feeding the soil with manure, lightening the heavy clay with green sand and finally purchasing a box of a hundred earthworms.

We started small with onions, greens, sweet peas, beans and corn. The first year we lost a good half of our crops to woodchucks and rabbits before they were human ready.

We set up a chicken wire fence and learned that it’s **nothing** for a woodchuck to dig and weasel its way under. The next year we buried the fence a couple of inches against the burrower and kept him out.

We grew tasty crops. Even the corn was delicious; just ask the squirrels who sat on the fence posts and ate their fill. We had no dog and were averse to using a BB gun, so we decided to buy our corn from the friendly farm stands. It was just as good and much less frustrating. Plus, we could try several different varieties.

Two tries was not enough to get an asparagus bed started in the still heavy soil. We gave the bed over to strawberries, which were great but which required replanting every couple of years. I resumed enjoying pick your own berry seasons at other gardeners’ fields.

After several years, much improved soil and busy earthworms, we began to grow tomatoes from seed. We’ve produced many crops of this wonderful fruit, mostly with great success. We learned that over-fertilizing produces huge, green plants but often much less fruit. In general though, our unsuccessful years were weather or blight related, rather than grower error.

There’s been a garden on this property for over thirty-five years. We continue to add manure and

see **GARDENERS** page B5

New Eye on Old Ties: Trish Crapo Visits Cuba



PHOTO BY TRISH CRAPO

From the Havana Streets series currently on view in the window galleries on Avenue A.

By **NINA ROSSI**

TURNERS FALLS – On view in the Avenue A Window Gallery this month are two series of photographs by Trish Crapo of Leyden. The Dune Shack photos were taken during Trish’s two-week stay in the wild dunes of the Cape Cod National Seashore near Provincetown, May of 2013. Several cameras were used to capture these scenes, including a plastic Holga camera, a small digital Lumix camera, and a phone (described in an article in the MR in November 2015 when these photos were shown at Hallmark).

Also on display is Havana Streets, photographs taken in Havana, Cuba this February. The exhibit, hung informally as if on a studio wall, represents a preview of the hundreds of photos Trish is still sorting through and discovering.

Trish feels a connection with Cuba that goes back to early childhood. The photographer and artist was born in Boston, but by the time she was a year old, the family lived in Miami, Florida. They lived very near 8th Avenue, the heart of “Little Havana,” whose Cuban population swelled after Castro took power in 1959, the same year they moved to the city.

Her father, a scientist who studied acoustics, was doing underwater research in the waters between Florida and Cuba. He studied how sound traveled underwater, plying the 90 miles between countries in a retrofitted Navy cutter. He obtained high security clearances from the CIA and the Navy, because his research data could be used to answer questions such as, where could a submarine hide? He also helped map the ocean’s bottom through the use of sound.

When Trish was in college in 1978, she took a trip to Cuba with

a study group. They had to fly out of Montreal, and she was conscious that the trip was strictly monitored as to what the students could see and where they could go on the island.

This winter, she was able to secure a spot with a team of teachers and scholars who were making a trip organized around professional development and cultural exchange. Through a friend, she found out that the tour did not fill, and there were several spots open which she and her husband Tom jumped on.

Once there, said Trish, they didn’t feel any supervision or restrictions. “We had a Cuban educational travel tour guide, and tour buses to travel on, but we had pockets of unscheduled time where we could wander. Our guide talked frankly and honestly, we felt, about the way things were and what they might become.” She added, “It’s a very complex mix. Kind of like America, but different.”

Some hard facts about life in Cuba that Trish learned include that the average income is equivalent to \$20 per month. “People get ration books for basic foods that cover about half the month, plus some ongoing staples like sugar or cooking oil.”

Because theirs was an educational trip, they had activities such as visiting kids in a ballet school; talks by economists and sociologists; a hip hop dance troupe (a video of

see **CUBA** page B4



Crapo and her husband, organic farmer Tom Ashley, at the home and studio of Cuban mosaic artist José Antonio Rodríguez Fuster this past February.

THEATER REVIEW

“Spring Awakening” Is a Revelation!

By **ELLEN BLANCHETTE**

ORANGE – The Arena Civic Theater production of “Spring Awakening” was a revelation. Presented by ACT at the Orange Town Hall auditorium, this musical production of an 1891 play by Frank Wedekind shocked Germany in the 19th century and is perhaps shocking still today.

It was developed off-Broadway in the 1990s with book and lyrics by Steven Sater and music by Duncan Sheik. This was followed by an award-winning Broadway production in 2006.

The play addresses directly many

issues facing young people of any era. This performance took courage on the part of all of the actors and the director, Megan Healey.

I do not know when I have felt so impressed with the courage of a group of actors as I was on Sunday afternoon watching this performance. This is a powerful drama, with music used as a vehicle by which the strength of the story is enhanced. The show starts with a lot of casual, fun, action-filled musical numbers, and grows to displays of sexuality and frustration – but the anger and hurt start to show as the

see **SPRING** page B8

A STITCH IN TIME CREATES NINE, PLUS MOTHER’S DAY BLANKETS

By **LAURA RODLEY**

MONTAGUE – Happenstance led Montague resident Lillian Fiske to St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in early April. Her “As You Write It” (AYWI) writing group needed a substitute location to meet while the Gill Montague Senior Center held its seniors’ tax sessions in their time slot.

AYWI member Joan Coughlin suggested the church. As both Coughlin and AYWI member Estelle Cade are also members at St. Andrew’s church, they had access to a little room that the group could use.

Inside the room was a collection of materials, from baby blankets to hygiene kits, to pencils that Coughlin and the church collected for Church World Service (CWS). For over twenty years, Coughlin has been collecting donated items for CWS to send worldwide. Her friend, Deerfield resident Ruth Sadowsky, helps too.

“They had 24 of everything, but only five bags, so I volunteered to make some bags,” said Fiske. The cloth bags with handles hold three notebooks, six pencils, and a box of crayons, eraser, pencil sharpener, and a ruler, and are sent all over the world where they’re needed. “Someone said these may be the only writing supplies the child has for his whole school life,” added Lillian.

She is an old hand at volunteering, doing so at her own church, First Congregational in Montague, that makes health kits for CWS, and also out in the community.

Now 92, Fiske started sewing in 3rd grade at age 8. “My grandmother took me in hand and we bought material, and stamped the pattern of a blouse on the back. I had to learn embroidery, and used her sewing machine. She measured my waist and put a band on

and made pleats, and a hem, and I was off ever since. I made a lot of my clothes in high school.”

see **FISKE** page B2



RODLEY PHOTO

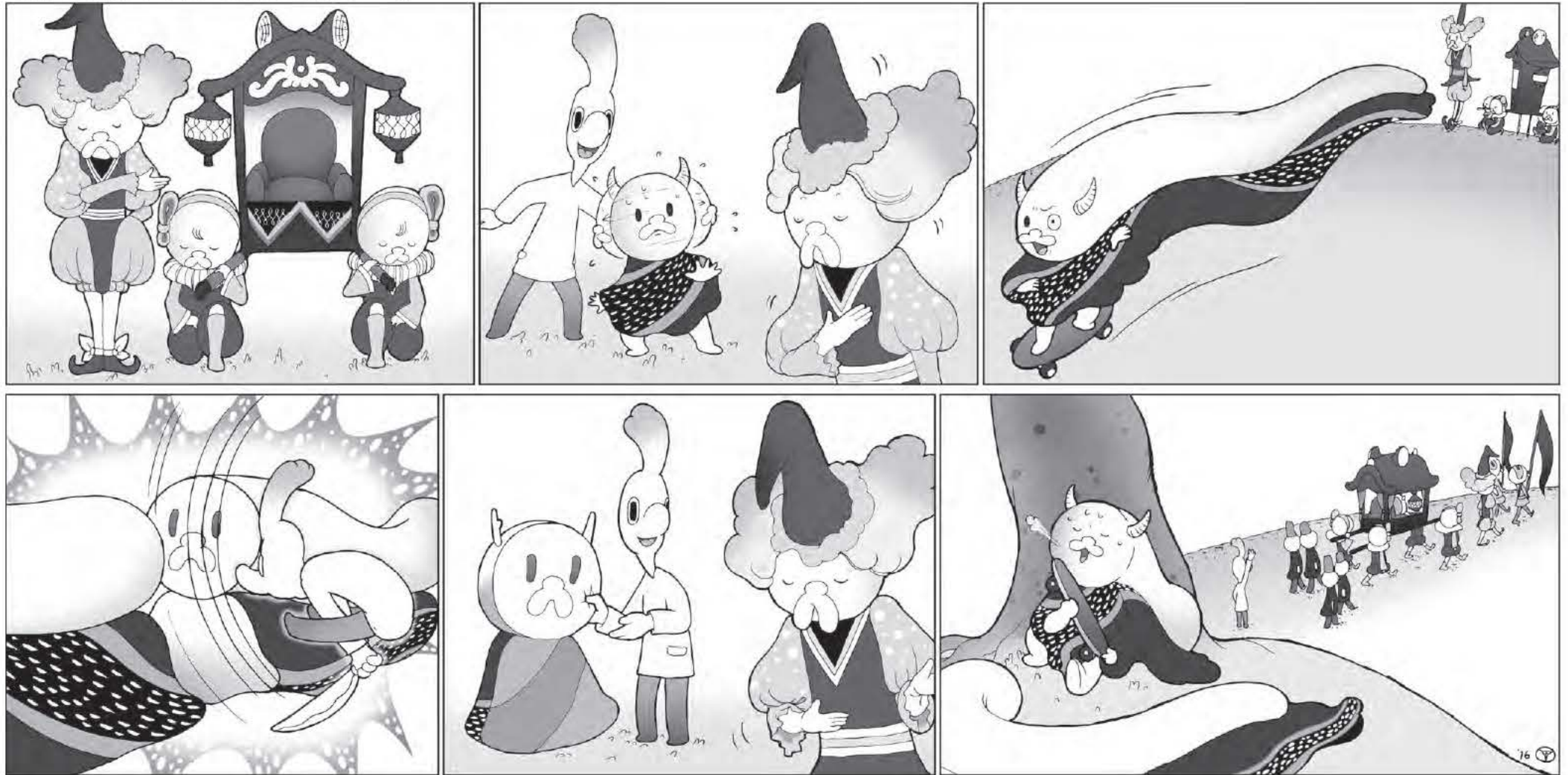
Lillian Fiske with the nine bags she sewed for Church World Service. The bags will be filled with school supplies and sent all over the world.



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Left to right, Chloe Castro-Santos, director Megan Healey, Hannah Trobaugh, and AJ Krawczyk as they discussed Spring Awakening in a talk-back session following last Sunday afternoon’s performance at Orange Town Hall.

WEIRD HEALING by OVERTURE



Overture is based in Shelburne Falls. Check out opertura.org.

Senior Center Activities

MAY 9 to 13

GILL and MONTAGUE
Gill / Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.
All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the Center is closed.
Tues, Wed & Thurs Noon Lunch
M, W 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:30 a.m. Chair Exercise
Monday 5/9
8 a.m. to 9:30 Foot Clinic by appointment
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 5/10
9:30 a.m. Mat Yoga (fee)
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Local History: Ed Gregory on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.
Wednesday 5/11
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach
11:15 a.m. Friends of the Senior Center Meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 5/12
9 a.m. NO Tai Chi
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 5/13
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals.
Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call the Mealsite Manager at 423-3308 for meal information and reservations.
For information, call Paula Betters, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.
Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.
Monday 5/9
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
Tuesday 5/10
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
9:30 a.m. COA Meeting
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance
11:30 Home Cooked Lunch RSVP
12:30 p.m. Crafty Seniors
Wednesday 5/11
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo, Snacks & Laughs
Thursday 5/12
8:45 a.m. Aerobics (fast)
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
Noon Brown Bag Pick-up
12:30 p.m. Creative Coloring
Friday 5/13
9 a.m. Quilting
9:30 Bowling at French King
FRTA Market Trip RSVP
11:30 Pizza Salad & Dessert
12:30 p.m. Painting.

LEVERETT
For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.
Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL
Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride.

FISKE from page B1

At the end of six weeks, Fiske surprised Coughlin with nine bags, most of them lined, featuring prints of the famed Dr. Seuss books' covers and some African wildlife prints that Coughlin had bought at the Survival Center. It took Fiske two-and-a-half-hours to create each bag.

Carol Steel, Carol Campbell and others also made bags.

Mother's Day Blanket Drive
St. Andrews has a 50- to 60-year tradition of celebrating Mother's Day with a special blanket drive.

Considered "a low calorie gift," donations are made, often in memory of someone's loved one, and sent to the Springfield-based CWS to purchase heavy grey wool or light summer-weight blankets to be distributed by the thousands, and used in emergency situations worldwide, explained Coughlin.

"They (CWS) were the first responders at 9/11, providing mainly trauma help. They are the first responders in disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes; they are still in Haiti, working when others have quit. I really sing their praises. They are

humble. They work person-to-person, kid-to-kid. You know the baby kits are going to a real little baby, and the school kits are going to a real little kid," said Coughlin, adding, "It's a long term thing; they also help with water pumps, teaching people how to get more out of their farming."

Those wishing to donate to the blanket drive, at \$10 per blanket, can make their check out to Church World Service and mail it to Joan Coughlin at 144 North Leverett Road, Montague, MA 01351. For more information, access cwsglobal.org.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Sunglasses for Eye Health

ILLUSTRATION BY JESSICA LARKIN

By **FRED CICETTI**

Q. There's a lot of snow where I live and I know I should wear sunglasses to protect my eyes, but what should I look for when I buy them?

This is a question with year-round relevance; the sun is around every day of the year.

The most important feature in sunglasses is the ability to protect your eyes from invisible ultraviolet (UV) light, which also causes sunburn.

Long-term exposure to the high-energy ultraviolet radiation in sunlight is linked to eye disease. Buy sunglasses that block 99 percent, or 100 percent, of all UV light. Look for a label that lists protection.

If you want to be extra careful, get wrap-around sunglasses because they keep out more light. Eye doctors also recommend wearing a brimmed hat when you're going to be in the sun for a long time.

If you don't protect your eyes from the sun, you risk getting cataracts, macular degeneration and cancerous growths on the eye. A cataract is a clouding of the lens, the clear part of the eye that helps focus images like the lens in a camera. The macula is at the center of the retina in the back of your eye. The retina transmits light from the eye to the brain.

Most of the eye damage caused by ultraviolet light rays is gradual and irreversible. People have different levels of sensitivity to ultraviolet radiation.

Some studies show that people with eye diseases such as macular degeneration may be at greater risk from UV rays. As a precaution, they should wear sunglasses whenever they are outdoors. This precaution is wise, too, for anyone who has had cataract surgery.

If you take drugs that make your skin more light sensitive, discuss eye protection with your doctor. These medicines can make your eyes more sensitive to light.

There are other features in sunglasses that you should consider. None of these features is linked to UV protection. Remember, always check a pair of sunglasses for a UV rating.

Shade: You'll need a dark lens if you are in bright sun frequently. However, a medium lens will suit you for most days. Sunglasses should be dark enough to reduce glare, but not dark enough to distort colors.

Color: Prevent Blindness America,

a volunteer eye health and safety organization, recommends lenses that are neutral gray, amber, brown or green.

Blue Blockers: There's a controversy over the possible harm done by blue light. There is blue light in the bright glare from snow or water. Lenses that block all blue light are usually amber colored. This color is supposed to help you see distant objects more easily. Amber sunglasses are used by many pilots and hunters.

Polarization: Polarized lenses cut reflected glare and are especially helpful for driving.

Photocromics: A photochromic glass lens automatically darkens in bright light and becomes lighter in low light. These are convenient for people who are in and out of doors all day.

Gradients: Single-gradient lenses are dark on top and lighter on the bottom. These are great for driving. Double-gradient lenses are dark along the top and bottom and lighter in the middle. These are suitable for skiing.

Mirror Coating: Lenses with mirror finishes reduce the amount of light that passes through to your eyes. These make an emphatic fashion statement.

Quality: A good way to check the quality of nonprescription sunglasses is to look at a rectangular pattern such as tiles. You'll know the glasses are good ones if the lines stay straight when you move your head.

If you want to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezers.com.

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Pet of the Week

Are you looking for a bunny who is super sweet and absolutely loves to hang out with you? Well then look no further than Easter.

This big girl wants nothing more than to sit by your side, eating a carrot and being petted.

She may be large but that doesn't stop this beautiful girl from enjoying life and lounging around when she needs a nap.

With slow introductions she may do well with another bunny.

Don't let her size scare you away, she is a gentle giant who just wants your love. Ask an adoption counselor for more information!

the social and outgoing behavior and enjoy being part of the family.

Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.



More About New Zealand Rabbits:

These rabbits are usually good with children and other pets, are very relaxed about being handled and are rarely aggressive. They are a wonderful rabbit and make a great beginner bunny as they are calm, easy-going and friendly. They are also known for

“EASTER”

Mother’s Day Reflections

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Mother’s Day was brought into being by a woman named Anna Jarvis, who wanted to honor her mother. According to Wikipedia, Jarvis’s mother had “been a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War, and created Mother’s Day Work Clubs to address public health issues.”

Jarvis wanted to continue the work her mother started. Her reason for creating Mother’s Day was “they were ‘the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world’”.

She had some trouble at first: Congress reject the idea to make it an official holiday in 1908. Although that year was not without a success, she “held a memorial for her mother at St Andrew’s Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia, which now holds the International Mother’s Day Shrine.”

The first state to recognize it was West Virgina, Anna Jarvis’s home, in 1910. By 1911 all US states were doing the holiday, with some seeing it as a “local holiday.”

In 1912, Jarvis also created the Mother’s Day International Association, and 1914 saw the day being made an official day by Woodrow Wilson.

At the time, Congress rejected the idea to make this day an official holiday. It was joked that they would have to proclaim also a “Mother-in-law’s Day.”

This was just a joke, but that could lead to some wondering what people’s thoughts on the holiday now are. The most obvious person to ask would be someone’s mom.

One mom named Britney said, “It excites me, because I’m a new mom – it will be my second one.”

“Yeah, but I feel it should be celebrated everyday,” said a young

woman named Stephanie. I believe Anna Jarvis would have loved to hear this person’s thoughts on the holiday and its importance.

She would also love to hear a man named Ron’s opinion of moms: “I think they’re best thing in the world. We don’t exist without them.”

Another woman, named Shirley, had this to say when it came to the job moms have to do: “I think moms are great and deserve respect for hard job. They often do more than they get credit for but not necessary looking for credit. It’s their job.”

As for my opinion on moms in general, and the holiday:

My grandmother had a plaque which said something about friends, implying that you should treat the new ones like they are silver, and the old ones like gold. Which implies both are worth a lot.

I believe that last part is how you should treat moms. Especially if you have a great mom for a parent. Not just one you believe that about, in the way that nearly everyone thinks they have a great mom – when people other than you agree that your mom is great, then it is not a biased opinion.

The holiday, to me, is the right way to honor moms. I don’t mean the commercialization of it by Hall-mark cards and other companies, which Jarvis didn’t like. She believed that the emphasis should be on “sentiment, not profit.”

My idea of the right way to go about doing the holiday is to have your mom’s favorite dinner, or getting her a music box with the word “Mom” on it.

I believe Jarvis would approve of me having my mom’s favorite dinner for the holiday, as well as of serving breakfast to moms in bed, like they do in New Zealand. I’m sure she would approve of the day being celebrated all over the world!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Sounds Like The Management At Power Town Apartments Should Maybe Call The Brick House Back About That

Monday, 4/25

11:10 a.m. Caller requesting that code red message be sent out to Greenfield Road residents between Sherman Drive and Randall Road; TF Water Department will be repairing a water main break, and water service will be turned off until further notice. Chief Dodge will be sending out Code Red. As of 3:15 p.m., TFFD advises all hydrants in area are functional.

Tuesday, 4/26

12:59 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road reports that there is a tree close to the country club that appears to have split; he is concerned that it may fall. DPW notified; stated they contacted Eversource 3 weeks ago about this issue. Eversource contacted again; responding to scene with a tree crew. Montague City Road closed briefly.

1:51 p.m. Caller states that crews working on a Power Town Apartments building behind the Brick House hooked a power supply to the Brick House and caused the power source to come away from the building. Caller attempted to contact Power Town Apartments directly, but discovered that their manager had retired, and has yet to receive a call back from the agency. Officer observed damage. Phone numbers for new Power Town Apartments manager, and for construction foreman, obtained and given to caller.

3:50 p.m. Party into lobby to report vehicle vs. deer accident near Sirum Equipment this morning. Party advises that deer appeared fine; it got up and ran away. Officer observed damage to vehicle (driver's side front fender and door).

4:01 p.m. Salvation Army employee reporting unwanted party in store. Responding officer asked male to leave and he did so; male did become upset but did not make any sort of scene until he left the store. Caller advised of options, including information on how to obtain a harassment prevention order or trespass notice.

Wednesday, 4/27

7:35 a.m. Caller from Randall Wood Drive reports that she noticed an animal in her outside dog house this morning; believes it may be deceased but is unsure. Animal control officer advises this is a deceased fox that appears to have mange. He has picked up the animal and will be taking for proper disposal. 2:03 p.m. 911 button pressed in Town Hall elevator. Male party stated it was an accident. Officer confirmed all is well.

2:16 p.m. Report of past hit and run accident in Food City parking lot. Advised of options. 4:50 p.m. Report of party cutting down trees on Fish & Game land. Referred to environmental police, who report that the land in question does not appear to be state land, but they will continue to investigate.

5:56 p.m. Caller reports that a vehicle “side-swiped” his vehicle in the Food City parking lot. Caller was going to exchange information with other operator; however, she stated she did not have her insurance information with her and went inside the store. Caller waiting by his vehicle in parking lot for officer. Report taken.

Thursday, 4/28

10:15 a.m. While on a detail, officer observed that the foundation of the house that burned down on Dry Hill Road has not been fenced off; officer advises that the building has been razed, but the foundation has not been filled in. Contacted building inspector's office; secretary advises that the foundation was supposed to have been filled in. She will have building inspector check site and notify owner. 8:06 p.m.

was arrested on a default warrant.

8:29 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street complaining of group “fighting” outside, screaming and using profanities. Officer checked area; all quiet. 10:37 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting assistance at Canal Bridge for vehicle rollover on their side of the bridge. Bridge shut down at Canal Street; later reopened.

Friday, 4/29

12:47 a.m. Caller from Third Street requesting that an officer contact her upstairs neighbors, who are banging on the

floor and keeping her up. Officers spoke with neighbors, who claimed to be sleeping, and advised them of the complaint.

1:45 a.m. Caller from Third Street reporting same loud noises from upstairs; advises all was quiet for 2 minutes after officers left, then it started again. All quiet upon arrival; upstairs tenant was awoken from sleep by officer's arrival.

10:18 a.m. Section 35 warrant of apprehension served to a party in Turners Falls; party transported to court.

11:18 a.m. Third party report of a two-car accident in front of United Arc; no injuries. One operator given verbal warning for failure to use care.

8:17 p.m. Caller from Kingsley Avenue complaining of party camping by the riverbank: one female party with a blue tent and a fire. Caller upset that involved party had to walk across his property to get to her location. Responding officer found that party had small cooking fire inside a pail dug into the sand. Party did pitch a tent as she was intending to stay the night here with her boyfriend; however, he will not be joining her. Party advised not to walk on caller's property.

8:19 p.m. Officer at skate park moving along a group of people.

Saturday, 4/30

11:15 a.m. Caller from Taylor Hill Road advises of 2 golden retrievers that he just chased out of his yard. Caller states that the dogs are often loose in the road. Referred to animal control officer.

7:03 p.m. Caller requests that officers check on 3 subjects that are walking on Fifth Street and may be intoxicated. One female in a white hat and carrying a black crossbow walking with 2 males. Subjects are carrying coolers. Unable to locate. Officer spoke with several people in the area who advised they did

not see anyone walking with a crossbow.

10:08 p.m. 911 caller from Turners Falls stated she does not have an emergency but would like her neighbors to quiet down. Caller advised to call back on the non-emergency line. Caller never called back.

10:27 p.m. Abandoned 911 call from Millers Pub. Responding officer advises possible fight at location. Erving PD off there. Officer providing courtesy transport to Shutesbury for one involved party; second officer transporting subject 2 home, as his ride fell through. All parties advised of options; all declined to pursue options.

Sunday, 5/1

1:24 a.m. Caller from Sherman Drive reports hearing what sounds like either fireworks or gunshots in the area; may be coming from Montague City Road. Officer checked area; nothing found.

12:38 p.m. Abandoned 911 call from Chicopee; upon callback, spoke with a male party who stated he just spoke with a dispatcher regarding a minor motor vehicle accident. While on line with caller, caller advised that a cruiser pulled up and was assisting him.

11:41 p.m. Party from Third Street into lobby to speak with an officer regarding someone standing outside her rear apartment door. Party states that at approximately 10:35 tonight, she went to leave for work, and a white female in a red hoodie was standing outside her apartment door looking in. Same was startled and ran downstairs into the second floor apartment. Caller went to work then came to MPD to report. Officer spoke with subject in Apartment B, who stated that she was the person at the rear door and was looking at her car; no other intent. Subject advised of complaint.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!

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OBITUARY

James Corbett Steen Jr. 1925-2016

James Corbett Steen Jr., 90, passed away at his home in Columbus, GA on Friday, April 22 after a long illness.

James is survived by his wife of 55 years, Bettie (Hogencamp) Steen; his son, Jeffrey Steen of Wilmington, DE; daughter, Cathy (Steen) Barbehenn of Baltimore, MD and her husband Richard; Laura (Steen) Rodley of Buckland, MA and her husband James J.; Jamie Rose (Steen) Marghi of Silver Springs, MD; Benjamin Steen of Frankford, DE and his wife Katharine (Hardin) Steen; Aletta Jo (Steen) Wade of Danvers, IL, 13 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his first wife, Sheila (Craig) Steen.

Born in Wilmington, DE on November 6, 1925, the only child of the late Reverend James Steen, and Elizabeth (Downard) Steen, he attended Wilmington Friends School in Wilmington, DE, earned his B.S. at the University of Pennsylvania, and a Master's Degree in International Relations at the University of Sussex in England. He served in the USMC in WWII.



He was an avid fan of news commentator Rachel Maddow, and greatly loved animals, particularly his domestic cat Hoochee and tigers.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Serenity Hospice in Columbus GA, or the Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL, 36104, or the World Wildlife Fund at www.worldwildlife.org/goto/JamesCSteenJr.

CUBA from page B1

this group in the window exhibit) and a talk by an American journalist who has lived there for decades. "We learned about other people's perspectives, and about the economy, and about how women are treated in the society.

"We also intersected with another group that was on a food tour. Restaurants are one of the few private enterprises that are permitted, and are springing up in people's homes and other places."

All real estate is state owned, so people only "manage" property there. "So you can imagine the inequality that starts to happen when American relatives send money to some families. That's why, side by side, one building will be crumbling and the next one newly plastered and painted. Three buildings fall down every day in Havana," she elaborated.

On the positive side, there is free healthcare, and education is free from preschool up through advanced degrees like law or medicine. However, the country has a problem retaining its most educated citizens, many of whom leave to

find higher-paying work elsewhere.

Trish became a "street photographer" during her stay, even though she felt somewhat self conscious about objectifying people through the lens of her camera. "I was careful to make eye contact with people because of this. And life there is out in the streets – whole families are out there," she explained.

Cuba holds a fascinating mix of old and new, with horse and ox drawn carts plodding along in the break down lanes of busy highways. American cars from the 1950s are still running on the streets, some spiffed up as taxis for the growing tourist trade, and others belching along on country roads in poor repair. "The infrastructure is poor there. If there are more visitors, it is going to make it very hard. There are not enough buses, etc."

Trish visited with some Cuban artists that she met through a Massachusetts gallery that specializes in Cuban art, the Galeria Cubana (lagaleriacubana.com). She wrote an article on the work of two artists represented there, Edel Bordón and Yamile Pardo, for Provincetown Art Magazine a few years ago. She took

this opportunity to contact them in their home country. The artist couple invited Trish and her husband (plus another couple who could translate for them) to their apartment and they all had dinner together.

One upshot of their friendship is an invitation for Trish to participate in an island-wide, international photography exhibit next November. Trish is very excited about her plans to return to the island. "One of the main qualifications for a travel visa to Cuba is that the visit offer a people-to-people cultural exchange – I think attending an opening that includes your own photos will qualify!"

Trish Crapo's photography and collage have been exhibited at galleries in Western Massachusetts, Boston, Vermont, at The New School in New York City, and, as part The War and Peace Project, in Moscow and Tula, Russia. She works as a freelance writer and photographer for, among other publications, the Greenfield Recorder. Photo prints from the Havana Streets series are available at the LOOT Shop, 62 Avenue A, and the Dune Shack series is available in book form there as well.



Turners Falls Goes to War: Part I



Photograph of the company, from then-Major Pierce's 1900 memoir "Reminiscences of the Experiences of Company L."

By REPORTER STAFF

Over the next year, the *Montague Reporter* will be periodically revisiting the Spanish-American War of 1898, particularly the story of Company L of the Second Regiment of the Massachusetts Infantry, Franklin County's unit in what was then the Volunteer Army of the United States.

Out of Co. L's 77 members, led by Captain Frederick E. Pierce – who would later become the namesake of our crumbling "General Pierce Bridge" between Montague City and Cheapside – two were killed in or by battle in Cuba, while another 15 died of illness there or during their long journey home.

Thirteen of the company, and five of the fallen, were from Turners Falls.

The war was officially declared on April 25, 1898, and on May 3, the company mustered at Greenfield before fawning crowds.

In his memoir, Pierce later wrote:

"The Company left Greenfield for South Framingham, May 3, 1898, in a drizzling rain; but the enthusiastic and warm-hearted sendoff of the townspeople made up for the dark clouds and soaking moisture, and most of the boys went off with light hearts and a determination to do their duty in such a way as to merit the confidence and good will displayed by the citizens."

We will be updating readers the news of the men and boys of Co. L, in real time, from this spring until next. This was the first war the village of Turners Falls experienced, and we find it particularly interesting to follow along with the advent of modern American patriotism on the home front.

Page 1 of the May 4, 1898 *Turners Falls Reporter* is missing from the Carnegie Library archives. The following excerpts ran on Page 4, though, under the "Turners Falls and Vicinity" column.

* * *

As the war cloud thickens the prices of the necessities of life begin to go up.

Four members of Court Turner No. 134, F. of A., were among the volunteers to Co. L.

Some of the local wheelmen expect to wheel to South Framingham camp to see soldiers in camp, Sunday.

There are no warships left on the bargain counter. But a good many of Spain's are not fit for a junk shop now, "and there are others."

Timothy O'Connell of G street, while returning from Greenfield after seeing his boy off with Co. L yesterday morning, on the front end of one of the crowded cars on reaching the turn at the South End, not having a good hold was thrown off, landing on his head. He was picked up insensible and carried to his home, where he soon recovered.

David Mulcahy went over to Greenfield, yesterday morning, to see the boys off, and met with a peculiar accident. Some giant torpedoes were being set off as the train pulled out and one was thrown at Mr. Mulcahy's head, with the result of a severe scalp wound, which necessitated in his being taken to a doctor and having the wound dressed. The injury will not prove serious, but it was a narrow escape.

A letter to the REPORTER from John Morrison says he is a U.S. Marine Corporal on board the *Panther*, and that his vessel was to start for

Cuba on Sunday, from Key West where she was coaling.

The many flags floating around the village indicate the patriotism of the people at the time. With almost every nationality here, there is but one sentiment: "Remember the Maine!"

It looks as though young John Morrison of this village would be one of the first soldiers of Uncle Sam to put his foot on Cuban soil. It is believed that the marines of his vessel are to be landed at Matanzas to make a base of supplies for the insurgents.

Greenfield made a great splurge over the departure of "her boys" to the front, and prominent citizens said many kind and encouraging words to the boys in blue who went for the honor of their country and the glory of Greenfield. In view of the fact that many Greenfield militia men refused to go to the front, and their places were filled by boys from here, Shelburne Falls and other places, a little credit should have been given where it rightly belonged. Many of the Turners Falls boys sacrificed much in going to the front. One young man left a wife and three children rather than be called a coward.

The Farley paper company offers to reinstate all its employees who enlist.

Now that the daily newspapers have real war news to tell, the people are happy, and take solid satisfaction in reading something that will not be contradicted in a later issue. The whole country is now in the greatest extacy of delight, and there are seventy million souls with but a single thought, and seventy million hearts that beat as one; not counting those on the other side of "the ponds."

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was May 4, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Erving Fully Funds Schools Using Paper Ballot Vote

Using a secret ballot, 85 Erving voters at Wednesday night's annual town meeting voted to override the finance committee's recommendations and fully fund the school department's request for primary and secondary spending for the coming fiscal year.

The vote was conducted for the first time in town memory using a paper ballot, under the suggestion of moderator Rich Peabody.

"There's a bus leaving after the meeting going down to Six Flags," Peabody joked about the pink wristbands handed out in conjunction with the ballots. "Free rides for everyone!" Voters were all given wristbands and balls as they signed into the meeting.

The paper ballot was used exclusively for Articles 4, 5, and 6, which dealt with the proposed school committee budget and the town's assessment for the Franklin County Tech School. After each vote was collected, town clerk Richard Newton marked an "x" on the wristband to indicate a voter had voted.

Gill Holds Brief Town Meeting

Gill opened its annual town meeting on schedule at 7 p.m. sharp on Monday evening. As soon as the meeting opened, the selectboard called for a continuance until June 26, at 6 p.m., with

a pre-town meeting to be held on June 18 at 7 p.m.

After taking one question, from former finance committee chair Sandy Brown, who asked, "Will you have budget figures ready by then?" to which the selectboard replied affirmatively, moderator Ray Steele gaveled the meeting to a close, and the 22 voters went home.

Elks Receive Permission to Tap Into Sewer Line

Water Pollution Control Facility superintendent Bob Trombley and highway superintendent Tom Bergeron came before the Montague selectboard on May 1 to discuss a request by the Montague Elks for a sewer connection for their planned lodge, banquet hall, and lounge on Millers Falls Road.

"The Elks want to ask for permission to connect to the town sewer before engineering assessments are made," said Trombley. He went on to explain the Elks would have to maintain the 3,200-foot plastic pipe and private pump station from the intersection of West Mineral Road up to Winthrop Street.

"The line would be a pressure line," said Bergeron. "It is impossible to tap into, and it will become the sole responsibility of the Elks." The board granted permission for the Elks to tap into the sewer line, on the condition engineering assessments are completed.

Montague Elks treasurer Jason Clark, said "We hope to make the new Elks Lodge one of the largest and finest facilities in Franklin County."

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Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors

GREENFIELD – Baystate Franklin Medical Center’s Oncology Department will present a free eight-week yoga class, *Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors*, at the YMCA of Greenfield.

The classes will take place on Wednesdays, May 4 through June 29, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Course facilitator is Pam Roberts, a certified Kripalu Yoga teacher and a breast cancer survivor for over 20 years. Roberts is also a certified Yoga of the Heart for Cardiac

and Cancer Patients instructor.

The free yoga program has been made possible by Baystate Franklin Medical Center’s Oncology Department and the YMCA in Greenfield. It is funded by BPMC’s annual *Wheeling for Healing* Bike Event, which supports Oncology patients, programs and services at Baystate Franklin.

For more information or to register for Gentle Yoga, contact Pam Roberts at (413) 625-2402 or pamro@aol.com.

Anti-Racism Film Fest

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church will hold its Fourteenth Annual Anti-Racism Film Festival on Sunday, May 22 from 1:15 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Parish Hall of the church on the corner of Hope and Main Streets in Greenfield.

In this time of controversy regarding our racial, religious, ethnic and class divisions, we are happy to offer this Festival to encourage conversation and collaboration between groups. We seek to build a community that is strong, healthy and respectful of differences.

Our church offers these four moving films: *Hate Crimes in the*

Heartland; *White Like Me: Race, Racism & White Privilege in America*; *Latinos Beyond Reel*; and *Powwow Highway*.

Discussion will follow the second, third and fourth films. Discussion leaders include: Momadou Sarr, anti-racism educator and teacher; Carl McCargo, anti-racism and media educator; and Strong Oak, Founder and Director of Visioning B.E.A.R.

Supper will be served from 6 to 7 p.m. Donations appreciated. Free child care. Questions? Call the church at 773-5018 or Molly Chambers at 772-0003.

GARDENERS from page B1

compost and lime when we think of it, and we are still successfully growing crops in the same space, with a bit of crop rotation here and there.

Last season we were chatting with a farmer out in the fields in Deerfield. He told us that some experts from the local university extension service told him early on that he could not continue to plant successful field corn in the same fields every year and expect to get a good crop. That was about twenty years ago, and he’s still planting there.

We’re glad to let go when it seems necessary, but I’m glad to say there are also strong stubborn genes in my family line. Three years ago, Ken helped me set in a third try at establishing an asparagus bed and the third try has done the trick!

We tried several recommended approaches. One involved digging deep trenches, setting in the roots and covering them gradually as they grew. Another recommended shallower planting. This last time, we set the roots in at what seemed a reasonable depth, covered them up and waited.

Letting go involves compromise. I was very stubborn this spring about refusing to use a rototiller. But Ken has equally stubborn genes. He recalled a manual digging tool a friend uses and did some online research.

This year’s **compromise is called** a broadfork. This is an old tool, also called a U-Bar. The broadfork has experienced a renaissance, because it easily helps the gardener aerate

the soil without damaging the topsoil, which is full of beneficial organisms and earthworms.

This tool consists of two long handles and a bar from which four or five tines protrude. The tines come in several lengths, depending on the gardeners’ **choice**. You press on the bar with one foot or two to sink the fork into the ground, and then step back and pull the handles toward you to lift the soil.

Using the broadfork in previously used areas does not require huge muscle. More power might be needed to start a new unused bed. So far I like the compromise, and it’s **much less labor intensive than** spading. Better for the health of the garden and the gardener!

Generally, I have strong opinions

on many subjects, but am usually open to other viewpoints and may be persuaded to compromise. We wish the word compromise were more often used by politicians. They seem to think it’s a dirty word and fear being seen as weak-kneed. Rather, it is a fine art.

Gardening is often hard work and sometimes disappointing. It is not for the faint of heart. It is also highly satisfying to put your hands in the dirt, plant a seed and watch it grow into a thing of beauty to eat or just to enjoy.

Let go of things that don’t work for you, and your gardening will give you more joy. Remember – it’s supposed to reward the investment of your time and energy.

If it doesn’t, let it go.



“Jukebox Memories” a Great Success

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – Opening the show Saturday night for the 2016 Annual Gala “Jukebox Memories” for the Gill-Montague Education Fund, Joey Pucci and The American Longboards band performed a high energy set of familiar pop and rock songs that had people tapping their feet and remembering their youth. Turners Falls High School’s auditorium was packed with an enthusiastic crowd that clearly appreciated the stroll down memory lane.

The band opened for the headliner, Brian McCullough, setting the tone for a fun evening of early rock ‘n roll music from the 1950s and ‘60s. If you don’t recognize the name McCullough, that’s **no surprise**. He performs as both Conway Twitty and Roy Orbison, taking very seriously his role as a keeper of the flame of both these icons of early rock ‘n roll.

The band’s **beautiful and talented** singer, Megan Houde, entertained with well recognized songs such as “Secret Agent Man” and the Peggy Lee song “Fever,” where she definitely showed the heat.

When Conway Twitty was introduced he came out to huge applause. He sang many of the old favorites, plus some not so well known, but all done with real heart. His voice was strong, tones pure, and the sounds of the time well remembered.

His rendition of “It’s Only Make Believe” was right on the money. A surprise choice was Orbison’s version of “The Rose” recorded as a country song many years ago, long before Bette Midler sang it in the movie *Beaches*.

At a break in the show, Joyce Phillips took a moment to speak of the efforts of the Gill-Montague Education Fund, saying “We’re all about the kids, all about the teachers,” and thanked all the supporters for their help in putting on the gala this year. She explained that one of their underwriters had dropped out, a contributor of \$1,500.

The underwriters pay for the band and expenses so that the money raised in tickets goes directly to the foundation for scholarships and educational support. She said they were concerned about the loss, but Greenfield Savings Bank stepped in to take their place with a donation of the amount lost. Expressing her gratitude for all the people who sup-



American tribute artist Brian McCullough, as Roy Orbison, entertains the crowd at the GMEF 2016 Gala with old favorites.

ported this effort, she told the audience they had raised \$100,000 for the education fund.

A brief segue gave Megan a chance to sing a few more great songs. She sang “Be My Baby” with perfection and then offered an emotional “You Don’t Own Me.” Throughout the show, Joey Pucci kept the tempo up with his drum beat and good humor. In between songs were bits of patter between Joey and the other band members, including some teasing and joking, with both Roy Orbison and Conway Twitty enjoying a little back and forth with Joey. Even Roy’s **water** bottle got some attention.

Roy Orbison didn’t **look or sound** like Conway Twitty. When he joined the band onstage he got a loud round of applause, as the audience went along with the pretense. He proceeded to sing some wonderful tunes in the style that was pure Roy Orbison. Great songs like, “Only the Lonely” “Blue Bayou” “Pretty Woman” and then, saying this was a great slow dance, he sang “Unchained Melody” ending the set with a powerful rendition of “Crying.”

The crowd cheered, giving them all a standing ovation at the end of the show. They cheered long enough for Roy to agree to stay and do one more song. He let the band go and sang a beautiful, touching version of a long time favorite, “My Prayer” without accompaniment. It was clear that everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening, with the extra satisfaction of knowing the show was to raise money for a good cause, supporting the students and teachers of the Gill-Montague school district. It was a great night.

Young Shakespeare Players East Presents: Romeo and Juliet

TURNERS FALLS – The dedicated young actors of Young Shakespeare Players East will recreate the most famous love story in Western literature – by performing, uncut, *Romeo and Juliet* on two weekends in May. For twelve weeks YSP East actors have worked 9 hours per week in rehearsal and countless hours at home studying Shakespeare, mastering the language and deeply engaging in the timeless themes of the play such as youth vs. age, extremism vs. moderation, love, vengeance, violence and death.

The performances will be held at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls on Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15 at 6 p.m. Those who miss the Shea run can catch an additional performance Saturday, and Sunday May 21 and 22 at 1 p.m. at the UMass Center for Interdisciplin-

ary Renaissance Studies, 650 East Pleasant Street, Amherst.

YSP East, a non-profit program, offers young people ages 8 to 18 the opportunity to perform full-length, original works of Shakespeare. There are no auditions, and every young person who registers receives one or more substantial speaking roles.

I’ve learned the difference between immature love and real love. Immature love is mostly obsessive. Romeo feels as though he can’t live without Rosaline, but he hardly knows her. His love for Juliet, on the other hand, is much more mature, more real. He is physically attracted to Juliet, but he also loves her mind, her wit.

– Max S., 14, YSP Actor playing Romeo

The two casts of YSP East’s *Romeo and Juliet* are involved in every aspect of the production. In addition to acting, the participants provide backstage technical support and help direct. YSP East is inspiring young people in the region to fall in love with the works of Shakespeare, and find their voice through their immersion in classical theater.

What I like most about Romeo and Juliet is the variety of characters and personalities. Just as in life, there are different sides to each character. In Capulet, you can see that he cares deeply about his daughter, and yet threatens to disown her in a fit of anger. He displays so many emotions, and I think that’s what makes the play so relatable. Every character in the play is so human.

– Madeleine L., 15, YSP Actor playing Lord Capulet

All matinee and evening performances are free and open to the public. During intermissions there will be delicious concessions available for sale, all proceeds directly benefit the Young Shakespeare Players East Scholarship Fund.

Ticket reservations are not required. Show your support for the Young Shakespeare Players East and experience this timeless, riveting play.

For more information visit: youngshakespeareplayerseast.org.

This program is supported in part by grants from the Montague and Amherst Local Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Cast members of the Young Shakespeare Players East rehearsing Romeo and Juliet, to be performed at the Shea Theater May 14 and 15.

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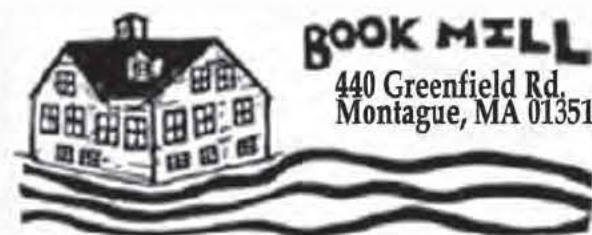
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Lisa McLoughlin, editor

Working Toward Equity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD — *Solving the Equation*, a report put together by the American Association of University Women in 2015, is an excellent short-cut to understanding the latest theories about why researchers believe women are under-represented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, and what they propose as solutions to the problem both within the education system, and in the workplace.

While in high school, girls currently take and succeed in math and science classes in roughly equal numbers with boys, so they are equally prepared to enter the STEM fields. Yet despite being slightly greater than 50% of the population, fewer women major in science, technology, engineering, and math than men. Only 26% of computer scientists are women (this number is decreasing!), and only 12% of working engineers are women.

Besides being some of the highest-paying fields, and therefore good for the economic well-being



"We Can Do It!" by J. Howard Miller; the 1943 poster of a strong female production worker created for Westinghouse that has since become an icon for female self-empowerment.

of women (and men) who choose them, equal representation in STEM is important because "Women's experiences — along with men's experiences — should inform and guide the direction of engineering and technical innovation. The United States simply can't afford to ignore the

perspectives of half the population in future engineering and technical designs." (*Solving the Equation*, page 2)

Research shows that problems contributing to achieving gender equity in STEM include stereotypes and bias toward women, and women feeling they do not belong. Solutions include demonstrating the relevance of these fields to prospective students, as women have a stronger desire to "work with and help other people." (*Solving the Equation*, page 4), and changing the education and work environments to be more friendly and accepting of all people.

This report is important because it shows that often simple changes to the environment of a school or workplace can help women and men succeed in greater numbers. The report is discouraging in that it shows the problem of bias (unconscious and conscious) continues to plague STEM.

Women in engineering, computing, and the sciences work in fields that have traditionally excluded them, and so they personally bear the

effects of this cultural legacy. Doing a scientific or engineering job should not be made harder for some than for others because of how people around them act, or structures in place that favor one gender over another.

Thanks to the hard work of previous generations, the opportunity to study and have a career in these fascinating fields exists for all; the work of making them more open and welcoming to everyone who wants to be there belongs to all of us now.

Usefully, the report includes specific recommendations for employers, educators, women and men working in STEM, policy makers, parents, and girls. It would be helpful if it added a few words of advice for

the rest of us, which might include something like: indulge your curiosity and follow wherever it takes you, and remember you can't tell what someone does for a living by just looking at them.

To read the full report, go to aauw.org

For more information about engineering as a field of study:

discovere.org/discover-engineering/engineering-careers

For more information about employment outlooks, organized by field: bls.gov/ooh/

For information specifically for girls about STEM fields: takeitgoanywhere.org and engineergirl.org.

Featured Scientific Organization: The Old Growth Forest Network

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

The Old Growth Forest Network is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to identifying and protecting one forest in each U.S. county where forests grow (approximately 2,370 counties out of 3,140). The network encourages people to visit these places and experience what a relatively untouched forest is like.

Joan Maloof is an ecologist who became a writer and then an activist in founding the Old Growth Forest Network. Her books are: *Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest*, and *Among the Ancients: Adventures in the Eastern Old Growth Forests*.

I read the second book and found it enjoyable, but I had even more fun on a walk she led at the MacLeish Field Station in Whately a few years ago. Maloof has a way with trees — and with people who love them.

She speaks eloquently in her books and in person about the many scientific benefits of old growth forests which include: increasing human health by efficiently cleaning air and producing oxygen; hosting a unique conglomerate of forest species (not just spotted owls); and sequestering large amounts of carbon.

And she does this without forgetting that forests have a value in and of themselves as beautiful, complex, unique systems.

Living in a rural area, it's immediately clear to most of us approximately what age the forests around us are, and the benefits of having a wide variety of forested land — some with little trees for deer and other wildlife to nibble and hide in, and some with the shade and free-flying area under big, old trees.

The old growth forest representing Franklin County in the network is the Mohawk Trail State Forest, which is well worth the trip out to Charlemont. It has great hiking trails through some of the tallest trees in New England featuring 500 (yes, 500) year old hemlocks. I was impressed with how quiet everything is out there,

which is another nice benefit of old growth trees.

Some old growth trees in Otis State Forest are protected by Article 97 of the state constitution; however, they would be threatened by Kinder Morgan's Connecticut Expansion pipeline. See pictures, and keep an eye on how things are going for these hemlocks, at sandis-fieldtaxpayers.org

More information available at the organization's website, oldgrowthforest.net.

Enjoy a walk among the ancients this spring.



Forest in Northfield.



Moon Calendar for May 2016:

Friday, May 6:	New Moon
Friday, May 13:	First Quarter
Saturday, May 21:	Full Moon
Sunday, April 29:	Last Quarter

*Sky Events Calendar by Fred
Esenak and Sumit Dutta (NASA's GSFC).
Moon image by NASA / Bill Ingalls.
Create your own custom sky calendar at:
eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SKYCAL/SKYCAL.html*

NatureCulture Events

Rattlesnakes Conservation on a Quabbin Island

Legislative oversight hearing at Athol Town Hall. A public hearing where the legislators will ask questions of MassWildlife officials and invited experts. Not an open forum.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit questions, concerns and comments to the committee by email to anne.Gobi@masenate.gov and matthew.Beaaton@state.ma.us; or call (617) 626-1015.

Tuesday, May 10, 11 a.m.

Athol Town Hall, 584 Main Street

Learn more at: mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/nhesp/species-and-conservation/timber-rattlesnake-conservation.pdf

American Turtle Observatory

Mike Jones and Liz Wiley will discuss their work on turtles. Free.

Wednesday, May 11, 7 p.m.

100 Main St, Athol

See americanturtles.org

Montague Plains for Nightjars

Dave Small will lead this trip to one of Massachusetts premier Sand plain habitats for a chance to hear evening birds. Flashlight, headlamp, and insect repellent rec-

ommended. Near the Turners Falls airport. Free.

Saturday, May 14, 7:30 p.m.

Directions, info: (978) 413-1772

Wild Foods: Forage and Feast (for women)

Explore forest and field and learn to identify the abundance of wild edibles that nature has to offer. Harvest and prepare spring greens, shoots and roots and go home with new knowledge, a handful of recipes, and a full belly. Fee.

Sunday, May 24, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leverett, Massachusetts

For more information: herwildroots.com


Quabbin Tracking with David Brown

The Quabbin Reservoir is surrounded by a huge protected watershed of forest, field and beaver ponds where human intrusion is light and wildlife abounds. Even in marginal tracking or birding conditions, a day spent in this "accidental wilderness" refreshes the soul. Pre-registration required. Fee.

Sunday, May 29.

To register: (978) 544-8175; info@dbwildlife.com


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ONGOING EVENTS:

EVERY SUNDAY

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians of all levels welcome to play traditional Irish music. 10:30 a.m.

ONE MONDAY EACH MONTH

Wagon Wheel, Gill: *Wagon Wheel Word*. First week of each month. Monthly poetry reading, often with special guest poets. 6 p.m.

Carnegie Library: *Outside the Lines!* Last Monday of each month. Adult Coloring Group. Supplies provided. 6:30 p.m.

EVERY TUESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: Crafts and activities for children of all ages. 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*: Thematic stories, projects, and snacks for young children with Mez, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. For ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

EVERY THURSDAY

Carnegie Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 a.m.

The People's Pint, Greenfield: *Derek Bridges*. Live acoustic guitar. 7 p.m.

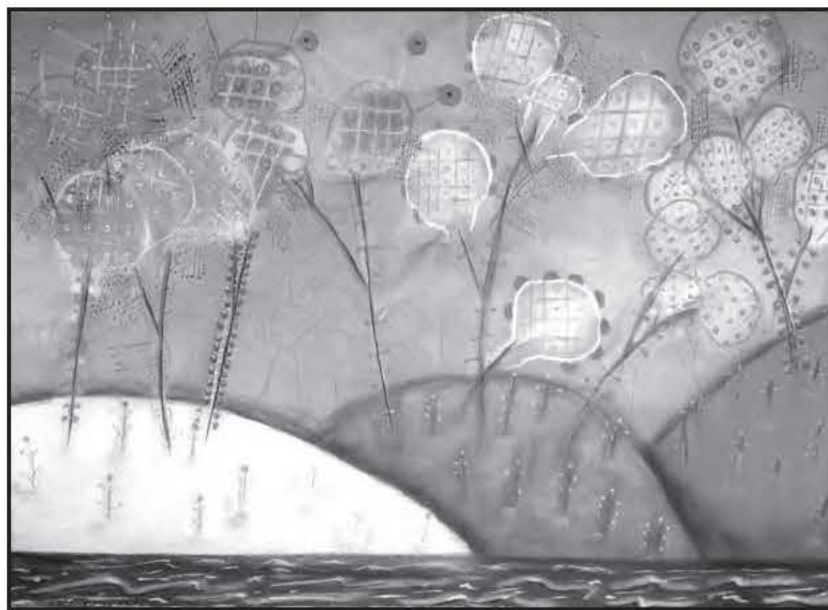
Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Watchdog Open Mic*. All musicians, comedians, and

magicians are welcome! 8 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY

Slate Memorial Library, Gill: *Story Hour*. Stories and hands-on arts & crafts. 10 a.m. to noon.

The Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m.



Along the River, is a show of pastels by Deerfield artist Rebecca Clark at the Salmon Falls Gallery, including works from the artist's Patty Pan Series. They are "abstractions that start with the seeds of water, hills, flowers, greens, and with the clouds above." Artist's reception is Sunday, May 15, 4-6 p.m. Through June 27.

EXHIBITS:

Artspace, Greenfield: *Photography of Angelina Delaney*. Through June 6.

Avenue A Storefront Galleries, Turners Falls: *Dune Shack & Havana Streets: Photography by Trish Crapo*. Work from Havana Cuba and the Cape Cod National Seashore. Through 5/21.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Vintage Powerhouse - Cabot Station: A One Hundred Year Retrospective*. This exhibit features historical photographs dating from the early 1900s that tell the story of the construction of the new concrete dam at Turners Falls, new power station and power canal expansion. At the time of its construction, Cabot Station was the largest hydroelectric facility east of Niagara Falls. Through 5/28.

Leverett Arts & Crafts, Leverett: Barnes Gallery presents: *Susan Valentine: Annual Open Studio & Gallery Show*. Artist's reception 5/7, 4-6 p.m. Through 5/29.

Loot, Turners Falls: *Zuihitsu: paintings by Greta Svalberg*. *Zuihitsu* is derived from two Kanji characters meaning "to follow" and "brush." Through 5/8.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *On the Cusp*. Exhibit of Natasha Henna's photographic art. Though 5/7. Closing artist's reception at the Nook on 5/7, 5 to 7 p.m.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *"Along the River" pastels by Rebecca Clark*. See photo and blurb this page for details.

Sawmill River Arts Gallery, Montague Center: *From Darkness Into Light/ A Spring Exhibit*. Recent works by gallery members of this collaborative. Though 5/31.

Shelburne Arts Co-operative, Shelburne Falls: *Something Else*. Photography, oils, and watercolors by Candace Silver. Opening reception 5/7, 4-6 p.m. Exhibit through 5/30.

Memphis Minnie meets electro-booby-shakin' attitude. 8 p.m. \$

FRIDAY, MAY 6

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Wilde Irish Women's Encore Performance! 1916 Rising Commemorative Concert*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton's 1940's Hit Parade*. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *GCC Spring Student / Faculty / Community Dance Concert*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Larry Allen Brown and the Acoustic Earth Orchestra*. Folk. 8 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Bleak, Twin Lords, No Window, and Sun Burial*. Heavy. All ages, substance free space. 8 p.m. \$

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*. Reggae Fantastico! 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 7

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: 25: *Lisa Leizman Dance Company Spring Concert*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Tara Greenblatt Band*. Singer/songwriter, folk, world. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Betsy & Mark's Dance Party*. 8:30 p.m.

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Moose & the High Tops*. Rock and roll cover band. 9 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Willy and the Poor Boys*. CCR and more! 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 8

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *One Part Luck*. Country Blues. 2 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Crow's Rebellion*. Warped Americana. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 9

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Nora's Stellar Open Mic Cabaret*. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 10

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wendell Word Series*. Deja Word all over again. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. 5 minute readings begin at 7 p.m. Donations.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shout Lulu*. Southern String Band. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: GCC Music Department presents: *Poetics of Song Concert*. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Doug Plavin All-Stars*. Rock/Folk and a little bit of everything. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Larz Young. Singer/songwriter. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: 6:30 p.m., *Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band*. Americana-ana. free. 9:30 p.m., *Brick House Benefit* with *Secret Lover*, *Brian Gillig*, and more TBA. Donations!

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Great Falls Coffeehouse presents: *Moonshine Holler*. American southern roots, Appalachian ballads & blues. 7 p.m. Donations.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*. Hyno Boogie Blues. 9 p.m.



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Sunday, 5/8 - 8 p.m.
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play progresses.

The musical numbers are in the tradition of good classic rock that remembers that words matter. All of the language in this play seems to reflect reality, rings true for the way teens talk and think, and sadly, how adults are inclined to respond to them.

A great deal of credit goes to director Healey, who found a way to help these young actors grow into a supportive ensemble and to find the courage to express their feelings so openly and without restraint. Chloe Castro-Santos playing the female lead, Wendla, was pure elegance. She has a lovely strong singing voice, and knows to bring good acting to her musical performance. She is a glowing presence on-stage, seems joyous in good times, expresses emotions with a wide range of sentiment. Always believable and in the moment, she played every scene with energy and focus.

Bobby Hawes playing Melchior, the male lead often opposite Castro-Santos, was the perfect match to her soft energy. His is a quiet strength but he holds a lot of emotion close to the surface. He could express arrogance, sorrow, despair, rage and yet the soft gentle moments between the two ultimate lovers were often the best. They both excel as actors and musical performers.

Hawes was also excellent in musical numbers with the boys. Some of Hawes' best scenes are in the second act, as Melchior starts to question his choices.

Tyler Conroy as Moritz gives an exceptional performance as a young man troubled but fighting to succeed and please his father. It is his father's rejection that leads to his demise. Conroy has some wonderful scenes with his friends, and with the young woman Ilse (Laura Langman) where she almost coaxes him to join her in a romantic stroll. His soliloquy at the end of his final scene is pure and stunning.

Emma Grace Geryk gives an outstanding performance as Martha, a pretty young girl who always seems to be cheery but who keeps a terrible secret: she is being physically abused by her father. She conveys her story with a balance of anger and restraint that is admirable.

Many difficult themes are addressed through the stories of each of the young characters: pregnancy, abortion, abuse, suicide, the risk they face as their young lives are mostly controlled by adults. The drama is intense but the show is brilliant and the young actors play it with such energy, love, compassion and strength to say nothing of guts, in the end it is an uplifting and enlightening experience of the sort rarely seen in the theater.


The rest of the cast, all wonderful singers and actors, are Nicholas Cummings as Hanschen, Cassandra Clark as Anna, Hannah Troubaugh as Thea, AJ Krawczyk as Otto and Collins Hilton who gives a terrific performance as Ernst, a young man confused and frightened by his attraction to a young male friend. Sean Sanford plays Georg plus is the dance and music captain.

Alana Martineau performed with skill the many adult female roles she filled, as did Joshua Aaron Mason in his multiple roles as every adult male. Amazingly, they generally succeeded in finding the true character of each role they played so only a similarity in appearance could have disclosed the trick.

Music is the heart of the show, so credit must go to musical director Ted Trobaugh. Sue Dresser did an excellent job as choreographer. Brittany Hamilton was the stage manager, Jennifer Goselin, production assistant. Melinda McCreven's costumes made the show the visual experience it was meant to be. Kevin Tracy was in charge of lights and set design; Dominic Baird was assistant production and light board operator; Charis Moeckel-Cole was assistant to the choreographer.

At the talk back session after Sunday's performance, the director and cast members explained the words written on black paper surrounding the stage. Healey told the cast to write their deepest, darkest secret thoughts on strips of paper, and put them in a large jar she brought for this purpose. Then she took what they had written and wrote it all on large sheets of black paper, which she put up around the stage.

Sharing their thoughts anonymously like this helped them grow together. Cast members said having it all out there helped relieve some of the burden of what they called "their junk."

Powerful words from a superior group of actors, who demonstrated a great deal of courage in their dedication to offering a truly honest performance of an amazing musical. 

FACES & PLACES



JOHN FURBISH PHOTO

On last Saturday's "Park Serve Day," this crew tended a garden of native plant species at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. From left: Sam Jurkowski, Jon Nelson, Department of Conservation & Recreation interpreter Janel Nockleby, Dawn Marvin-Ware, and Discovery Center supervisor Shawn Kennedy.

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